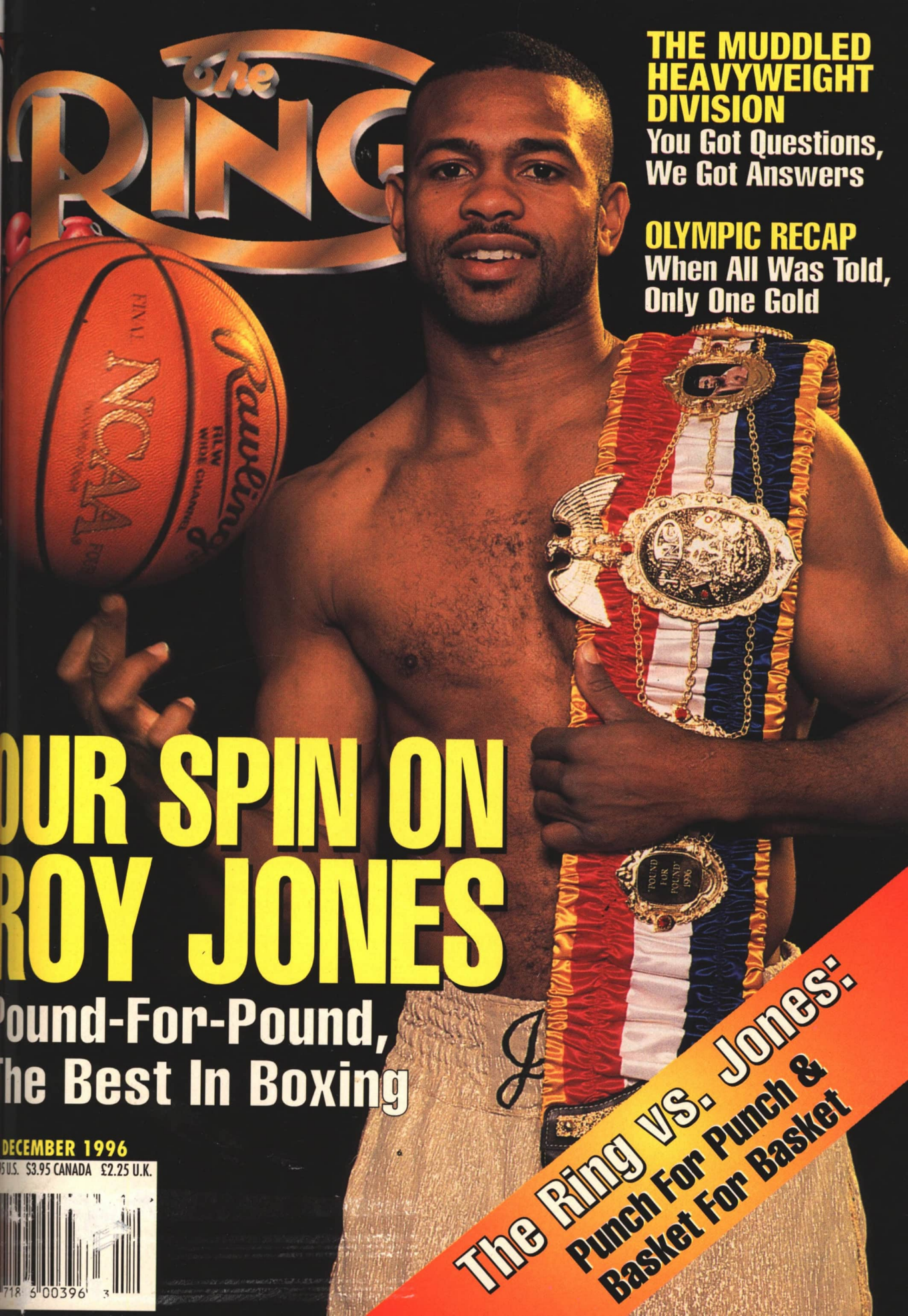
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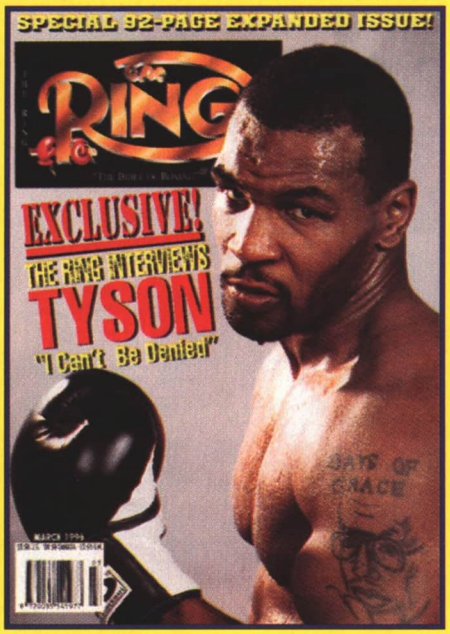

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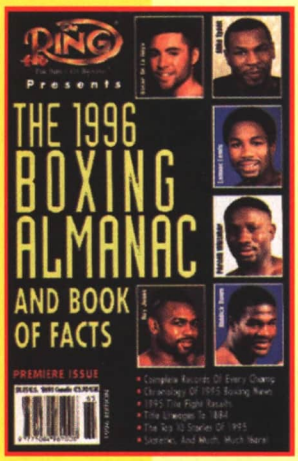

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Photo by Teddy Blackburn

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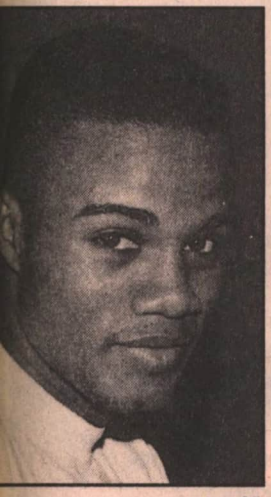

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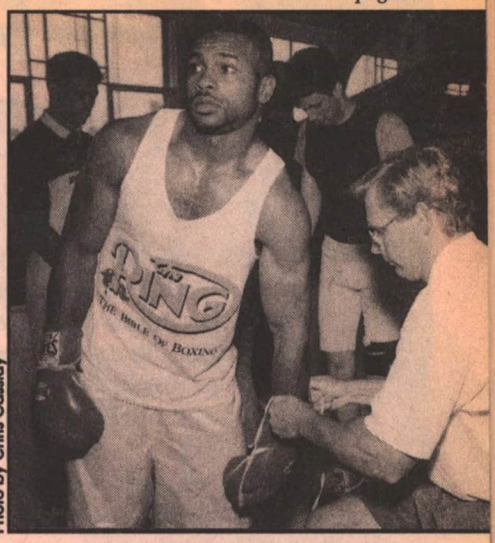

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RINGSIDE

When I called Stan Hoffman a couple of days after the Olympic Games in Atlanta, I didn't know whether to offer congratulations or condolences. Hoffman was almost sure to sign David Reid. That meant that a gold medalist was going to join the manager's stable. But it also meant Hoffman was going to have to shell out a helluva lot more money than he had anticipated. One-punch kayos in internationally televised Olympic gold medal bouts tend to have that effect. If you don't think so, consider that only 11 of all the previous Olympic gold medal matches had ended by knockout.

NBC did a masterful job of hiding the boxing competition. Fortunately, Reid's third-round knockout of Cuba's Alfredo Duvergel *(see our Olympic recap on page 24)* was aired for all to see. Make no mistake: It was just as golden a moment as Michael Johnson's sprint, Carl Lewis' jump, or Kerri Strug's vault—and far more miraculous.

It was no surprise that a star was born in Atlanta. But who could ever have imagined that it would turn out to be David Reid?

By the way, Reid never did sign with Hoffman. Instead, he hooked up with Amerika Presents, a new promotional firm headed by Mat Tinley and Dan Goossen. The deal: a long-term $50-million contract.

***

So Sugar Ray Leonard's going to fight again? Does that mean I have to pay attention?

***

If NBC could've televised the first Ali-Frazier fight live, would The Peacock Network have turned the opportunity down because of a fear of alienating female viewers?

***

How many times have you heard someone say, "Hell, *I'd* get in the ring with [fill in superstar fighter's name] for a million bucks"? Well, frequent contributor Robert Cassidy got in the ring with Roy Jones for next to nothing, and played him one-on-one in hoops, too. For participating in our first-person story *(see page 38)*, Jones received a couple of THE RING tank tops and about a dozen heartfelt thank yous. All Cassidy went home with was one do-or-die deadline to file his copy.

For the last few months, or ever since Pernell Whitaker's undistinguished performance against Wilfredo Rivera, THE RING has recognized Jones as the best fighter in the world. Along with that designation came our pound-for-pound belt, worn proudly by Jones in our cover photo. But the unbeaten IBF super middleweight champion better continue to impress us. (Translation: no more defenses against the likes of Eric Lucas.) In case Jones hasn't noticed, Oscar De La Hoya is gaining fast.

As for Cassidy, the next time he hears someone say, "*I'd* get in the ring with that guy for a million bucks," he'll no doubt flash a half-smile and recall his afternoon of fun and games with Roy Jones. His only mistake was bringing a video camera. How will he be able to lie to his grandchildren when his game-winning tomahawk dunk turns out to be an off-balance jump shot, and that thunderous hook to the point of Jones' chin appears on screen as a jab that missed by a mile?

Steve Farhood
Editor-in-Chief

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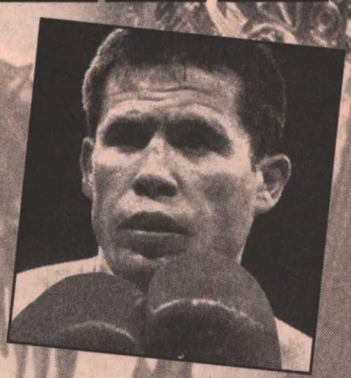

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COME OUT WRITING

We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

LOW BOWE

Recalling the numerous low blows slammed into the groin of South African Pierre Coetzer, the prefight mugging of an unsuspecting Larry Donald, and the calculated leveling of a downed Buster Mathis Jr., Riddick Bowe has shown himself to be little more than a chump extension of his manager, Rock Newman.

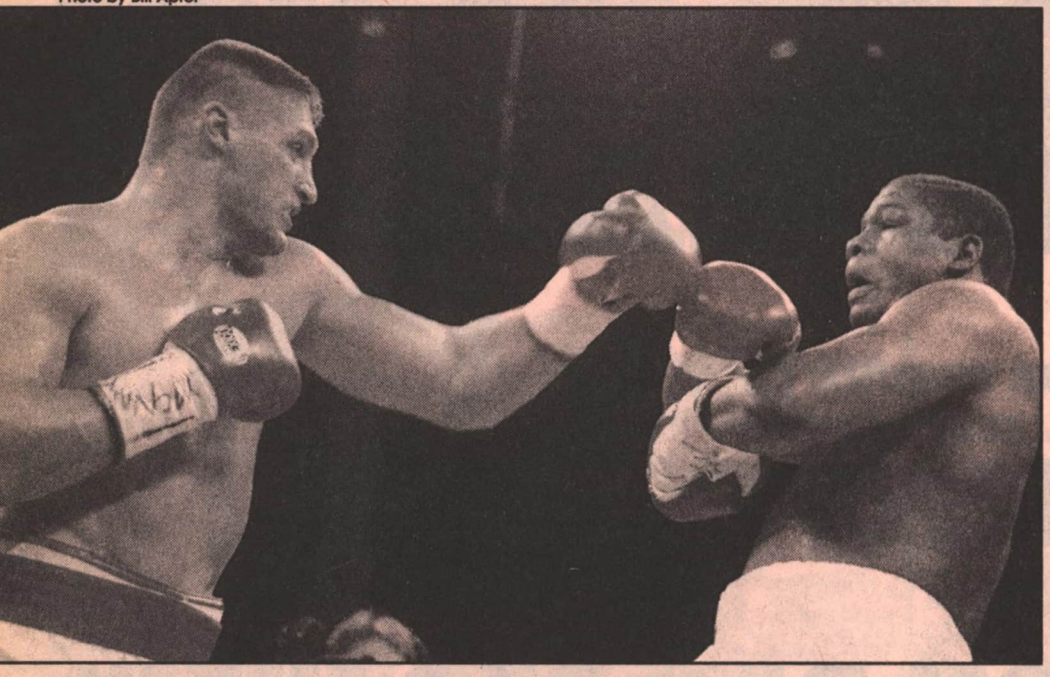
It is perhaps poetic justice that the unholy duo of Bowe and Newman were treated to a bit of their own tasteless medicine, courtesy of a life-hardened, down-and-dirty Andrew Golota. For better or worse, Golota has arrived. God have pity on any man silly enough to cross his path.

NORM LONGTIN
Somerset, CA

At the turn of the century, and even up to the Joe Louis era, promoters feared riots when pairing black and white fighters. When a popular white fighter lost to a black fighter, riots, lynchings, and other disgraceful racist acts occurred.

In July, Andrew Golota, an obscure white fighter, completely dominated Riddick Bowe, a popular black former world champion. After being saved by a series of low blows, Bowe's corner and the partisan crowd were still not satisfied. Some of Bowe's handlers, all of whom were black, stormed Golota's corner, throwing punches and kicks at the fighter and his cornermen, who happened to be white. Even the 74-year-old Lou Duva did not escape their rage.

Photo by Bill Apter



Upstart heavyweight Andrew Golota was seemingly en route to an upset win over Riddick Bowe when he was disqualified for repeatedly hitting low. Bowe entered the fight weighing 252 pounds and it showed in his performance.

How dare a white fighter beat up a black fighter in his hometown! Boxing has come full circle, and this was another black eye. If you don't feel racism played a part in this sad event, imagine if it had been Mike Tyson, Michael Moorer, or Lennox Lewis beating up on Bowe. Do you think the riot would still have happened?

MIKE LANKFORD
Nashville, TN

Prior to July 11, I was probably the biggest Bowe fan in boxing. But I lost all respect for Bowe the night be fought Golota. With all his riches and success, Evander Holyfield would never have shown up for a fight in Bowe's condition. You have to wonder about Bowe's desire to fight. I don't think he'll ever get back to where he once was.

JACK BLAIR
Dallas, TX

Photo by AJ Bello/Allsport

With Bowe flat on the canvas, members of his entourage rush Golota's corner. The post-fight action precipitated a mini-riot that lasted for almost 30 minutes.

"Fat Daddy" Bowe ate himself out of being the best heavyweight in the world. Golota beat him so badly that a Bowe-Tyson fight would be a big joke.

STEPHEN VINCENT
Syracuse, NY

Bowe was given a blessing in disguise. Golota was giving him a beating and a boxing lesson. Instead of punching Golota and hitting him over the head with a cellular phone, Bowe's camp should have thanked him for getting disqualified. The DQ saved Bowe from further punishment and humiliation in front of his hometown crowd.

JOSEPH LOSTRITTO
Guilderland, NY

WOMEN IN THE RING

Columnist Jeff Ryan has the right to his own opinion about women's boxing—no matter how wrong it is. Many sportswriters write negatively to get attention. Or does Ryan not like boxing at all? In "Ryan Out Loud" (August 1996), he wrote that a woman's place is not on a stool in a corner, with a Q-Tip placed in her nose. Ryan must like to control people, especially women.

A woman's place is where a woman feels comfortable.

LARRY NAVARRO
Copperas Cove, TX

I write this letter with a touch of sympathy for Jeff Ryan, whose male ego must be terribly bruised knowing that women are now upstaging men in boxing. Maybe that was the reason Ryan wrote that pathetic column.

As a female boxer, I can tell you why a woman would want to box: For the same reason men do—I enjoy it.

ANDREA COSGROVE
Leeds, England

I share Jeff Ryan's sentiments regarding lady pugilists. I feel that any guy who enjoys watching two women engage in mutual mayhem before a screaming, bloodthirsty crowd either thinks there is absolutely no difference between men and women or is a battered husband.

JACQUE R. FARMER
Detroit, MI

I wholeheartedly second Jeff Ryan's column on women's boxing. I also view the sight of women in pain, fighting to stay conscious, attempting to rise from the canvas, as wrong. Historically, enough blood has been shed by women due to domestic and random acts of violence.

Women fighting women—don't believe it for a minute. It's the mentality of a woman being punched hard, with blood flowing and breasts straining against a wet, bloody T-shirt, that excites the beer-soaked crowd. This is the reality of violence to women.

Be it overt or implied, the mentality of women being hurt in any way is sick, and the people who enjoy it do not belong in boxing.

CHARLES CHAVARR
San Diego, CA

THE GAMES OF ATLANTA

What an amazing opening ceremonies for the Olympics! Boxing doesn't get the attention it deserves during the Games, and it was great to see two of the sport's classiest individuals, Evander Holyfield and Muhammad Ali, playing major roles in the lighting of the torch.

Boxing gets kicked around a lot. But on this one night, the sport was untouchable. Thank you, Atlanta Olympic Committee.

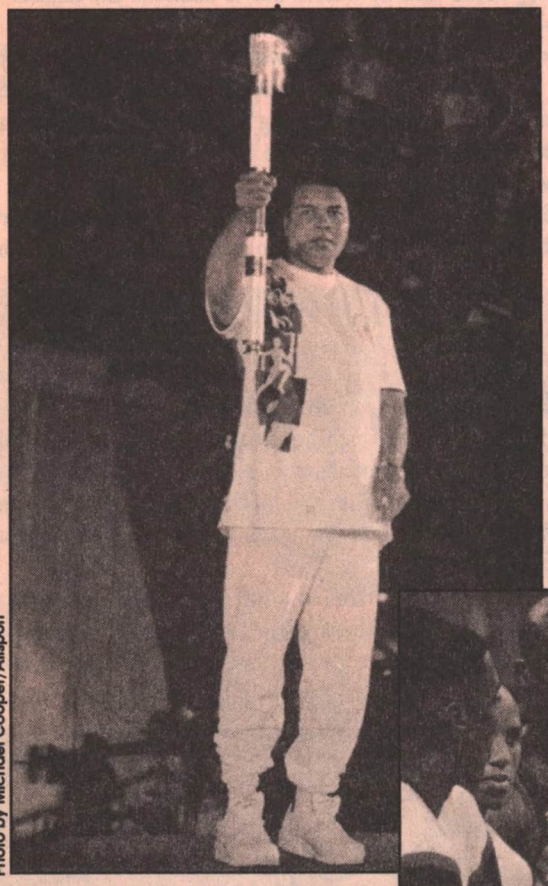
BRIAN CURLEY
Brockville, Ontario ■

Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Stacy Prestage connects against Andrea DeShong during their pay-per-view televised six-rounder on the Camacho-Duran undercard in Atlantic City. Women's boxing is growing, much to the consternation of certain fans.

ROUND ONE

THE TORCH, THE GOLD, AND "THE GREATEST"



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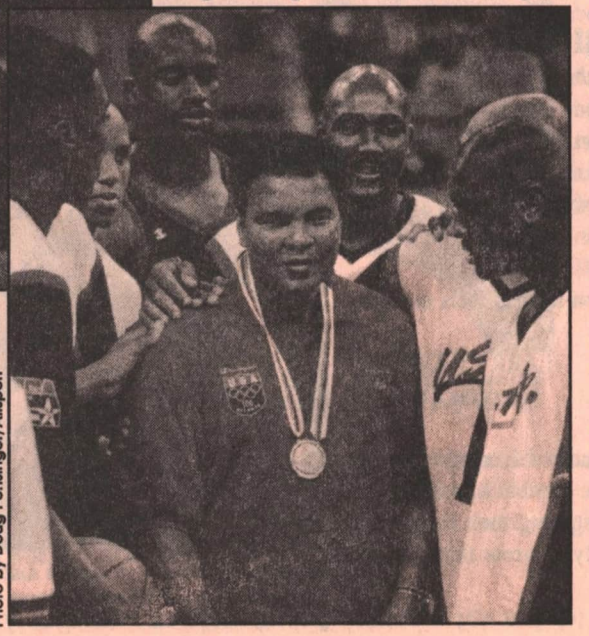


Photo by Doug Pensinger/Allsport

Ali was a surprise choice as lighter of the torch (above). Later in the Atlanta Games, the Dream Team looked on as "The Greatest" was re-presented with a gold medal (right).

It wasn't easy stealing a show that featured today's greatest athletes, but that's exactly what "The Greatest" of all-time did at the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Muhammad Ali was an inspired choice to light the Olympic torch. He won a gold medal at the 1960 Games in Rome, and continues to embody the Olympic spirit. When, at the tail-end of the opening ceremonies, 1984 bronze medalist and Atlanta native Evander Holyfield darted down the track at Olympic Stadium and handed off to swimmer and multi-medalist Janet Evans, the world braced in anticipation of who would follow as the lighter of the torch. It had been a well-kept secret, and after Evans climbed the steps and came to a stop, there appeared Ali, his left hand shaking from the effects of Parkinson's syndrome, but his transcendental presence as glorious as ever.

For 17 days, Ali was showered with affection. Everybody, from the multimillionaire members of the Dream Team to obscure athletes from obscure countries, wanted their picture taken with the world's most famous man. Ali's personal highlight came at halftime of the U.S.-Yugoslavia gold medal basketball game, when International Olympic Committee President Juan Antonio Samaranch presented him with a gold medal. Beaming, Ali kissed the medal.

(Ali had lost the medal he won in 1960, and not, as widely reported, tossed it into the Ohio River in frustration after being refused service in a whites-only restaurant.)

Ali no longer has to throw punches. He's all about love now, something that was clearly evident when the world gathered in Atlanta.

–Steve Farhood

CHIQUITA: A TOP BANANA

The announcement came on August 6, about a month before Chiquita Gonzalez was to begin his fourth charge toward the junior flyweight title: The mighty Mexican wouldn't be facing Baby Jake Matlala on HBO's *Boxing After Dark*. In fact, he wouldn't be fighting anyone ever again.

Gonzalez, 30, quietly bid adios, finally giving in to the wishes of his wife and mother, who had been pressuring him to retire ever since his last start, a kayo loss to Saman Sorjaturong in July 1995. He finished with a record of 41-3 (29).

"I think he, as much as anybody, is responsible for making a name for the lighter-weight guys," said John Beyrooty, publicist for Forum Boxing, which promoted Gonzalez. "He brought excitement to a division never known for it, and his three losses were among the most memorable fights I've ever seen."

Photo by Brent Cook

Chiquita: No more Fights of the Year

Each of those kayo defeats, suffered at the hands of Rolando Pascua, Michael Carbajal, and Sorjaturong, cost Gonzalez the 108-pound world title and underlined his inability to turn down a good, old-fashioned brawl. His losses to Carbajal and Sorjaturong were THE RING's Fights of the Year in 1993 and 1995, respectively. He gained revenge by twice outpointing Carbajal, and was headed toward a return vs. Sorjaturong when he decided to hang up his gloves. In all, Chiquita engaged in 18 world title fights and made a total of 11 successful defenses.

The good news: An intelligent and thriving businessman, Gonzalez has saved plenty of his purse money.

For most of the first half of the '90s, Gonzalez, a switch-hitter, was a fixture in the pound-for-pound ratings. Few champions combined refined technical skills and a crowd-pleasing style quite like he did. He'll be best remembered for his first showdown with Carbajal, and understandably so. But for balance, let's not forget his June 1992 defense against Kwang Sun Kim in South Korea. Trailing on points, Chiquita scored a last-round kayo to keep the title.

In an era of pretend champions, it doesn't get much more legitimate than that.

–Steve Farhood

ATOMIC ARREST

On July 27, former WBC heavyweight champion Oliver "The Atomic Bull" McCall was arrested in Chicago on charges of crack cocaine and marijuana possession. It was his second drug-related arrest in four months.

According to the Cook County state attorney's office, police stopped McCall, 31, for driving his Pontiac Grand Am illegally down a lakefront bike path. Officers asked to see his driver's license, and when he said he didn't have one, they asked him to get out of the car. That's when officers said they saw a plastic bag on the seat containing less than a gram of suspected crack cocaine. A search turned up about 3.5 grams of marijuana.

Police said McCall was uncooperative and refused to give them his name, age, or hometown.

McCall: Drug arrest

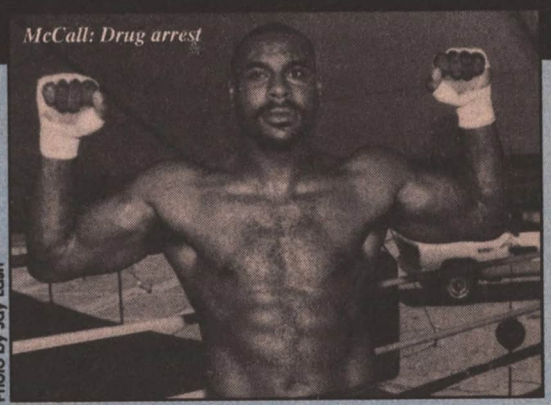
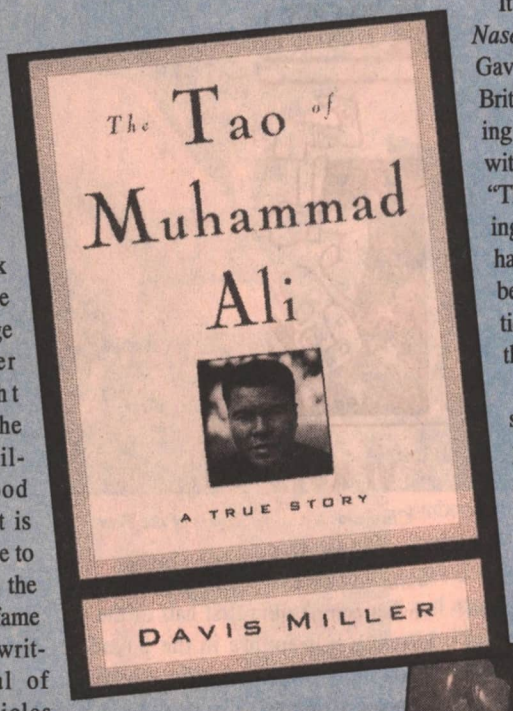


Photo by Jay Lash

On April 9, McCall was charged with possession of marijuana in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

Poor Muhammad Ali. As if the world's most famous victim of Parkinson's syndrome hasn't suffered enough, now along comes *The Tao Of Muhammad Ali* (Warner Books, $22), whose author, Davis Miller, is so relentlessly and obnoxiously narcissistic that it makes the narcissism of the former Cassius Clay seem almost demure.



This book pretends to be Miller's homage to the former heavyweight champion of the world, and Miller's boyhood idol. In fact, it is Miller's homage to himself, and to the 15 minutes of fame he earned by writing a handful of freelance articles several years ago about his rather odd relationship with Ali—who, in the numerous conversations reported herein, seems to recall Miller's name only once. At least half of its 306 pages are about Miller and his fairly unremarkable struggles as a motherless adolescent, in schools and his marriage, as a video store manager, coping with his father's death, and trying to find the meaning of it all.

And, Lord, is there meaning. "Nothing is mundane, all things vibrate," writes Miller, who invests every word, breeze, and intimation with the heavy significance that was a staple of the old TV series *Kung Fu.*

Some of the scenes with Ali are poignant, but one resists being totally swayed by them because in the Author's Note that leads off the book, Miller states, "Although the narrative is not always historically accurate, and although some chronology and numerous details have been changed for dramatic effect, it is, in essence, true."

Miller is the ultimate glass-is-half-full man. Ali's debilitating condition, he says, "has given us all the opportunity to care about him," and makes Ali, "everybody's grandfather." Heavy, man.

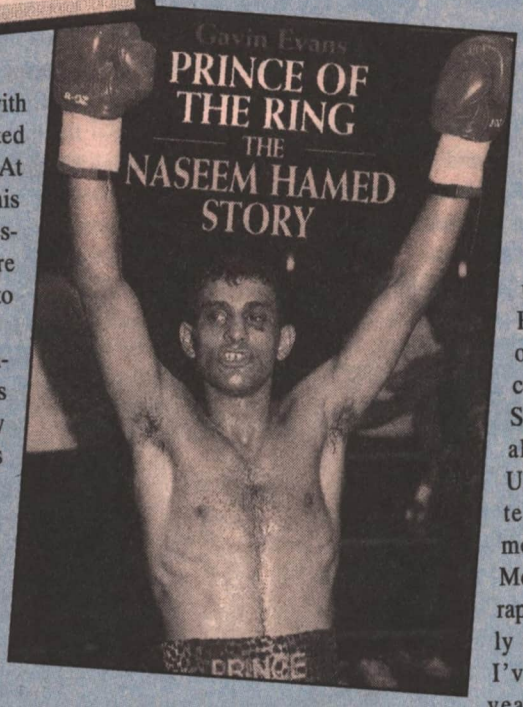
This book is supposed to inspire awe. It does, but not in the way its author clearly intends. Instead, one is awed by Davis' own ego and opportunism.

–Pete Ehrmann

***

It is only in the last chapter of *Prince Of The Ring: The Naseem Hamed Story* (Robson Books, £16.95) that author Gavin Evans manages to place his subject, the charismatic British prodigy, in proper perspective. Evans closes by gushing over Hamed's potential for greatness. Nothing wrong with that. But until that point, the reader is led to believe that "The Prince" has already accomplished his goal of establishing himself as a legend. In fact, Hamed, a featherweight, hasn't yet beaten the best fighters in his division, much less been inducted into the Hall of Fame. He is not an "international celebrity," nor "the best fighter in the world." Some things take time, and Hamed is only 22.

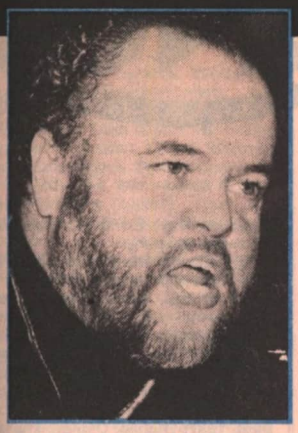
I met Hamed about a year ago, and it is easy to understand why Evans, a topnotch fight scribe, chose such a young and relatively unaccomplished fighter as a subject. Hamed is boyishly charming and cocky, and as verbally adept in conversation as he is manually adept in the ring. Add his background (he is a Muslim of Yemenite descent), his odd training habits (he often works out after midnight and regularly spars with heavyweights), and unique fighting style (he can dance, but also strike with one-punch power), and what writer could resist?



Most American fight fans are unfamiliar with Hamed; he has only recently received exposure on Showtime. But he's all the rage in the U.K., and Evans tells his story in a most readable way. Moreover, the biography is as thoroughly researched as any I've read in recent years. I just wish Evans had waited another few years to write it. After all, so much of the story has yet to unfold. Call it a cynical American's bias if you must, but all the potential in the world does not a legend make.

–Steve Farhood

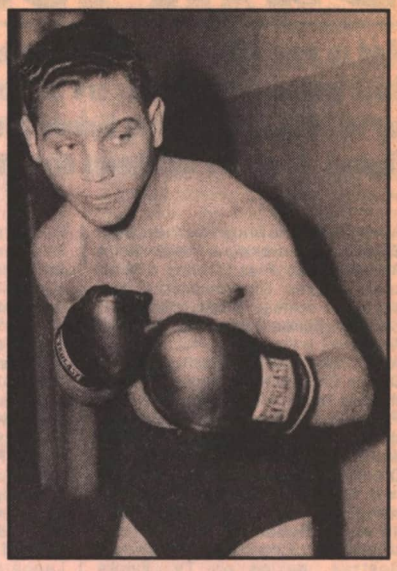
THE 10 ROCK NEWMAN EXCUSES THAT NEVER MADE THE PAPERS



Newman: "You can't blame me"

10. "Grassy knoll in Dallas, Texas? On the Friday in question, I was playing hide-and-go-seek in Brandywine, Maryland."
9. "Harbor a fugitive? I never even *dated* Patty Hearst."
8. "I don't know anything about Tiananmen Square. I was almost the centerpiece on ***Hollywood Squares*** once, but they used Ruth Buzzi instead."
7. "Trading arms with Iran? Why would I bother? Barkley's been washed-up for years, and my left is as strong as ever. Just ask Elijah Tillery."
6. "I've never been a member of any sort of militia. As for the rest of the members of Team Bowe, I have no comment."
5. "You have it all wrong. I was an adviser to Jose *Melendez*, a lightweight from Mexico, not Eric and Lyle *Menendez*."
4. "Just because I had O.J. on my fantasy football team ... "
3. "Waco? Loco, maybe, but never Waco."
2. "Watergate? I'm not even a Republican. But I did try to hire Gordon Liddy to spike Jorge Luis Gonzalez' Cuban cigars with wacky weed."
1. "If you saw me with Lindbergh's baby, it must've been because he looked like one of Riddick's."

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Montanez: Top Puerto Rican lightweight

Ferd Hernandez, a top-10 middleweight in the '60s, died in Omaha, Nebraska. He was 57. Hernandez worked as a championship referee ... Legendary promoter **Babe Griffin**, 88, died of an apparent heart attack in a Los Gatos, California, convalescent home ... In July, 27-year-old former heavyweight contender **Tommy Morrison**, who is HIV positive, suffered a seizure and was briefly hospitalized. According to Morrison's promoter, **Tony Holden**, the seizure was caused by legally prescribed drugs ... Former lightweight contender **Pedro Montanez**, among the first of the great Puerto Rican fighters, died of a heart attack at age 82 ... The fallout from the **Riddick Bowe-Andrew Golota** bout at Madison Square Garden and the mini-riot that followed: The manager's license of **Rock Newman**, who handles Bowe, was suspended by the New York State Athletic Commission. (As we went to press, a hearing was pending.) And the commission fined Bowe $1-million of his $5-million purse.

THE PUNCHLINES

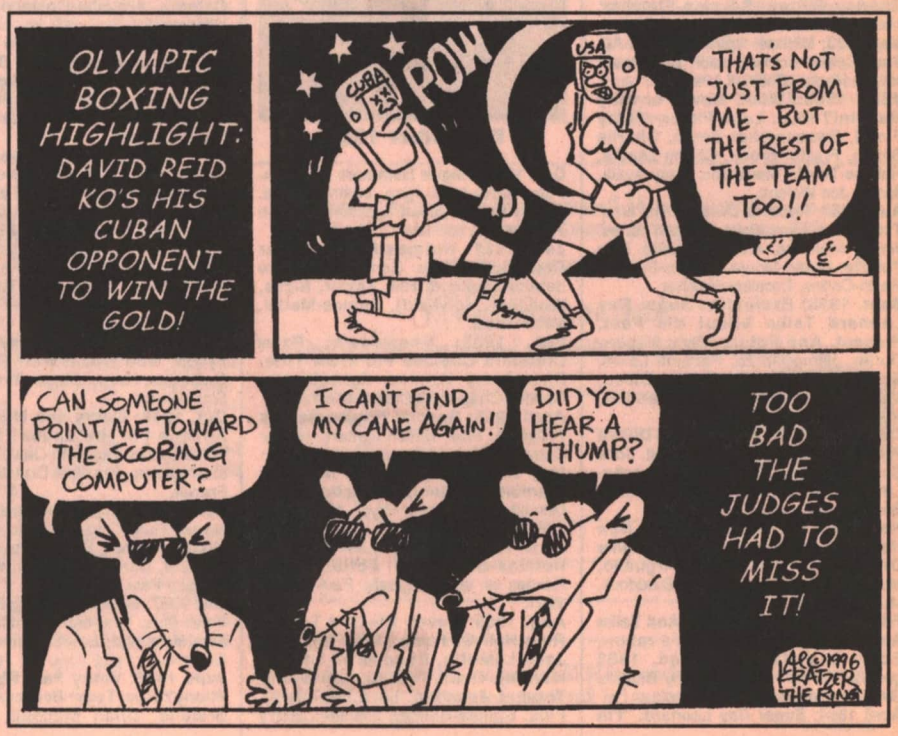
"There were so many more men who have done so much for boxing, for the United States. You look at it, he was a draft dodger, he didn't like his white brothers, all the things he said was really against America. I just thought it was a slap in the face for boxing."

–Joe Frazier on the selection of Muhammad Ali to light the Olympic torch

"Seven or eight guys were real stiffs. Then the rest of them aren't anybody to write home about either."

–Heavyweight prospect Crawford Grimsley commenting on his 20 victories to *The New York Times*

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



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Feb. 1982: Special Holmes-Cooney Program Section. Plus: Irish boxers, Sean O'Grady, Ali, Pedroza-Ballas, Braxton-Muhammad, Pedroza-Sibaca, Sanchez-Cowdell, Best of The Ring Anthology.

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May 1983: Michael Spinks Wins It All. Plus: Spinks-Braxton color, Bob Arum, Marvin Hagler, Collins-LaPaglia.

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Sept. 1983: Exclusive: Sugar Ray Leonard Talks About His Past, Present, And Future. Plus: Hagler-Duran, Jaime Garza, Panama Lewis, Spinks-Muhammad, Bobo Olson, Mustafa Hamsho, Muniz-Chandler, Hearns-Sutherland.

Oct. 1983: Special Hagler-Duran Program. Plus: Best fighter poll, Jose Sulaiman, Milton McCrory, Camacho-Limon, DeLeon-Gordon, Hamsho-Benitez, who's who, Bill McNeese.

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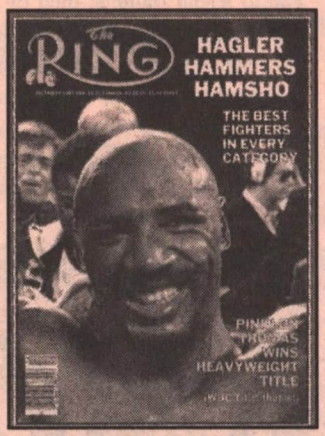

December 1984

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	☐ Dec/84	☐ Oct/86	☐ Nov/88	☐ Jun/91	☐ Feb/94
☐ Aug/81	**All 7 $28**	**All 10 $37**	**All 10 $37**	☐ Jul/91	☐ Mar/94
☐ Oct/81				☐ Aug/91	☐ Apr/94
	☐ Jan/85	☐ Apr/87	☐ Jan/89	☐ Oct/91	☐ May/94
☐ Feb/82	☐ Feb/85	☐ May/87	☐ Feb/89	☐ Dec/91	☐ Jun/94
☐ Aug/82	☐ Apr/85	☐ Jun/87	☐ Mar/89	**All 8 $31**	☐ Jul/94
	☐ May/85	☐ Jul/87	☐ May/89		☐ Aug/94
☐ Jan/83	☐ Jun/85	☐ Aug/87	**All 4 $18**	☐ Jan/92	☐ Sep/94
☐ Feb/83	☐ Aug/85	☐ Sep/87		☐ Jul/92	☐ Oct/94
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☐ Jun/83	☐ Nov/85	☐ Dec/87	☐ Mar/90	☐ Oct/92	☐ Wint/94
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THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended August 8, 1996

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Al Cole gives up the IBF cruiser title and eyes the heavyweight division

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **MIKE TYSON** Southington, OH *44-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *29-1*
3. **RIDDICK BOWE** Fort Washington, MD *39-1*
4. **MICHAEL MOORER** Detroit, MI *37-1 (IBF Champ)*
5. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Atlanta, GA *33-3*
6. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL *28-1*
7. **TIM WITHERSPOON** Philadelphia, PA *45-4*
8. **BRUCE SELDON** Atlantic City, NJ *33-3 (WBA Champ)*
9. **HENRY AKINWANDE** England *30-0-1*
10. **ALEXANDR ZOLKIN** Westerville, OH *24-2*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **NATE MILLER** Philadelphia, PA *27-4 (WBA Champ)*
2. **ADOLPHO WASHINGTON** Lexington, KY *25-3-2*
3. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ** Argentina *20-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **FABRICE TIOZZO** France *34-1*
5. **TORSTEN MAY** Germany *15-0*
6. **KENNY KEENE** Emmett, ID *34-1*
7. **ALEXANDER GUROV** Ukraine *17-1-1*
8. **CARL THOMPSON** England *19-4*
9. **DAVID IZEQWIRE** Washington, D.C. *19-1*
10. **YOSUKEZAN NISHIJIMA** Japan *15-1*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **HENRY MASKE** Germany *30-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **VIRGIL HILL** Bismarck, ND *42-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** Chicago, IL *23-0*
4. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** Germany *31-0*
5. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI *52-2-2*
6. **MERQUI SOSA** New York, NY *27-5-2*
7. **MIKE McCALLUM** Brooklyn, NY *49-3-1*
8. **WILLIAM GUTHRIE** Philadelphia, PA *22-0*
9. **FRANK TATE** Houston, TX *36-4*
10. **ROCKY GANNON** Bay City, MI *25-5*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL *32-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **FRANK LILES** N. Hollywood, CA *29-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **STEVE COLLINS** Ireland *33-3*
4. **NIGEL BENN** England *42-4-1*
5. **VINNY PAZIENZA** Cranston, RI *40-6*
6. **VINCENZO NARDIELLO** Italy *30-5 (WBC Champ)*
7. **BRYANT BRANNON** Trenton, NJ *16-0*
8. **HENRY WHARTON** England *24-2-1*
9. **MICHAEL NUNN** Davenport, IA *49-3*
10. **SUGARBOY MALINGA** South Africa *41-10*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA *30-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **KEITH HOLMES** Washington, D.C. *28-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **WILLIAM JOPPY** Washington, D.C. *22-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **JOHN DAVID JACKSON** Seattle, WA *35-1*
5. **SHINJI TAKEHARA** Japan *24-1*
6. **JORGE CASTRO** Argentina *99-5-2*
7. **QUINCY TAYLOR** Dallas, TX *26-4*
8. **DANA ROSENBLATT** Malden, MA *28-0*
9. **LONNIE BRADLEY** New York, NY *24-0*
10. **OTIS GRANT** Canada *28-1*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **TERRY NORRIS**
   Mission Valley, CA *43-6 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ**
   Argentina *56-2 (WBA Champ)*
3. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   St. Petersburg, FL *35-1*
4. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO *35-2*
5. **BRONCO McKART**
   Monroe, MI *28-2*
6. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI**
   France *32-2*
7. **HECTOR CAMACHO**
   Orlando, FL *61-3*
8. **RAUL MARQUEZ**
   Houston, TX *23-0*
9. **EMMETT LINTON**
   Tacoma, WA *22-2*
10. **ANTHONY STEPHENS**
    Shreveport, LA *27-7-2*

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA *38-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico *29-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana *32-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI *37-1*
5. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ**
   Mexico *36-3-1*
6. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico *22-1-1*
7. **YORI BOY CAMPAS**
   Mexico *64-1*
8. **PATRICK CHARPENTIER**
   France *22-4*
9. **PATRICK COLEMAN**
   Chicago, IL *25-5*
10. **JAMES PAGE**
    Pittsburg, CA *17-2*

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA *22-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia *17-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **FRANKIE RANDALL**
   Warren, OH *52-4-1*
4. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ**
   Mexico *96-2-1*
5. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *41-0*
6. **CHARLES MURRAY**
   Rochester, NY *37-3*
7. **JUAN COGGI**
   Argentina *70-3-2 (WBA Champ)*
8. **KHALID RAHILOU**
   France *27-2*
9. **FRED PENDLETON**
   Miami, FL *40-21-4*
10. **JAN BERGMAN**
    South Africa *32-0*

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **ORZUBEK NAZAROV**
   Japan *23-0 (WBA Champ)*
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO *19-0*
3. **PHILLIP HOLIDAY**
   South Africa *28-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **GEORGE SCOTT**
   Pembroke Pines, FL *29-1*
5. **JEAN-BAPTISTE MENDY**
   France *49-5-2 (WBC Champ)*
6. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA *19-0*
7. **LEAVANDER JOHNSON**
   Atlantic City, NJ *26-1-1*
8. **JOHN-JOHN MOLINA**
   Puerto Rico *39-4*
9. **ARTUR GRIGORJAN**
   Uzbekistan *19-0*
10. **IVAN ROBINSON**
    Delran, NJ *23-0*

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **AZUMAH NELSON**
   Ghana *39-3-2 (WBC Champ)*
2. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ *24-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **GENARO HERNANDEZ**
   Los Angeles, CA *33-1-1*
4. **TRACY PATTERSON**
   Highland, NY *55-4-1*
5. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea *20-2 (WBA Champ)*
6. **GABE RUELAS**
   Arleta, CA *42-3*
7. **REGGIE TUUR**
   Whitestone, NY *41-3-1*
8. **ROBERT GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA *25-0*
9. **ANATOLY ALEXANDROV**
   Kazakhstan *27-3*
10. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
    San Antonio, TX *30-3-2*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **TOM JOHNSON**
   Detroit, MI *43-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **LUISITO ESPINOSA**
   Japan *39-7 (WBC Champ)*
3. **NASEEM HAMED**
   England *22-0*
4. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ**
   Puerto Rico *48-7-3 (WBA Champ)*
5. **KEVIN KELLEY**
   Flushing, NY *45-1-2*
6. **MANUEL MEDINA**
   Mexico *52-7*
7. **EVER BELENO**
   Colombia *30-2*
8. **WELCOME NCITA**
   South Africa *39-2*
9. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico *16-1*
10. **DERRICK GAINER**
    Pensacola, FL *16-4*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico *42-0*
2. **DANIEL ZARAGOZA**
   Mexico *53-7-3 (WBC Champ)*
3. **VUYANI BUNGU**
   South Africa *30-2 (IBF Champ)*
4. **KENNEDY McKINNEY**
   Memphis, TN *29-2-1*
5. **ANTONIO CERMENO**
   Venezuela *24-1 (WBA Champ)*
6. **JUNIOR JONES**
   Brooklyn, NY *39-2*
7. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico *23-0*
8. **ORLANDO CANIZALES**
   Laredo, TX *42-3-1*
9. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
   Mexico *18-0*
10. **ANGEL CHACON**
    Puerto Rico *19-0*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
   Las Vegas, NV *20-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **MBULELO BOTILE**
   South Africa *20-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **NANA KONADU**
   Ghana *36-2 (WBA Champ)*
4. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO**
   Colombia *32-1*
5. **ANCEE GEDEON**
   Westminster, CA *14-8-1*
6. **VEERAPHOL SAHAPROM**
   Thailand *4-1*
7. **ROBBIE REGAN**
   Wales *17-2-3*
8. **PAULIE AYALA**
   Ft. Worth, TX *17-0*
9. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSUK**
   Thailand *12-0*
10. **DAORUNG CHUWATANA**
    Thailand *57-5-1*

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **HIROSHI KAWASHIMA**
   Japan *19-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Albuquerque, NM *35-0-2*
3. **DANNY ROMERO**
   Albuquerque, NM *27-1*
4. **ALIMI GOITIA**
   Venezuela *15-0 (WBA Champ)*
5. **HAROLD GREY**
   Colombia *21-1 (IBF Champ)*
6. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines *33-1-1*
7. **HYUNG CHUL LEE**
   South Korea *19-6*
8. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia *23-0*
9. **POLO SAUCEDO**
   Houston, TX *11-2-1*
10. **SAMSON DUTCH BOY GYM**
    Thailand *17-0*

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. *30-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **YURI ARBACHAKOV**
   Japan *22-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **SAEN SOW PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand *25-0 (WBA Champ)*
4. **ALBERTO JIMENEZ**
   Mexico *32-3-2*
5. **CHATCHAI ELITE-GYM**
   Thailand *23-1*
6. **CHOKCHAI 3-K BATTERY**
   Thailand *31-2*
7. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico *32-2*
8. **ISAIAS ZAMUDIO**
   Blythe, CA *42-5-1*
9. **JESPER JENSEN**
   Denmark *17-0*
10. **MIGUEL MARTINEZ**
    Mexico *34-10-1*

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand *29-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **MICHAEL CARBAJAL**
   Phoenix, AZ *40-2 (IBF Champ)*
3. **KEIJI YAMAGUCHI**
   Japan *19-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **CARLOS MURILLO**
   Panama *31-2*
5. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico *46-5-4*
6. **JESUS CHONG**
   Mexico *29-7*
7. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa *44-10-2*
8. **HI YONG CHOI**
   South Korea *19-2*
9. **MANUEL JESUS HERRERA**
   Dominican Republic *16-4-1*
10. **PHITCHITNOI C. SIRIWAT**
    Thailand *16-1*

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES**
   Super Middleweight
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Welterweight
3. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Welterweight
4. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Welterweight
5. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Junior Featherweight
6. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Strawweight
7. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
8. **TERRY NORRIS**
   Junior Middleweight
9. **MIKE TYSON**
   Heavyweight
10. **MARK JOHNSON**
    Flyweight

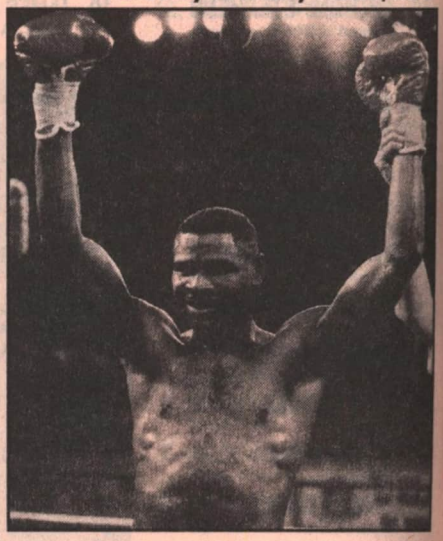
NEW FACES

GLEN JOHNSON

Middleweight

By Tommy Deas Jr.

Photos by Anthony Neste/HBO



Glen Johnson's childhood dream of a career as a reggae musician had faded like a puff of smoke. He had only a lifetime of labor as a construction worker to look forward to when he wandered into a Miami gym in search of a better way.

The native of Jamaica, who had been interested, but not inspired, when he watched Muhammad Ali's televised fights as a youth, was already 20 years old.

"I had very small potential," Johnson freely admits. "That made me work much harder. People told me I was too old to become a boxer. When somebody tells me I can't do something, it makes me want to prove them wrong. It started to come together about two years into it."

Seven years after his start, Johnson's potential has shown no signs of unraveling. After compiling an amateur record of 35-5 and fighting his way to the U.S. Nationals, he has enjoyed even more success as a pro. The 5'11" middleweight prospect has won his first 26 outings, 17 by knockout.

Starting at an age when most athletes are just beginning to reach their primes, Johnson didn't try to take any shortcuts. He just tried to outwork everyone in the gym.

Johnson, who migrated to Miami at age 14, fought as an amateur under coach Bobby Baker at Miami's Coconut Grove Gym. After a handful of outings as a pro, he attracted the attention of manager Patrick Gerrits, who lured him across town to the Leprechaun Boxing Gym.

"I saw a very hard-working, dedicated man who was willing to pay the price," Gerrits says. "I saw a man who trained hard every day, and I saw some real talent."

That talent began to blossom in 1995,

(Continued on page 54)

Johnson zeroes in on Kenny Parker

PRO RECORD

1993		
Feb. 19	Yurek Delrio, Ft. Lauderdale	KO 1
March 27	Jerry Reyes, Grand Cayman	KO 3
June 26	James Mullins, Harris, NC	KO 3
Aug. 20	Tony Brooks, Ft. Lauderdale	W 4
Oct. 22	Dwayne Waldon, Ft. Lauderdale	W 6
1994		
April 8	Ralph Monday, Cape Coral, FL	W 4
Aug. 5	Vincent Godbolt, Miami Beach	KO 3
Sept. 3	Carlos Velez, Miami Beach	W 6
Sept. 8	JoJo Harris, Davie, FL	KO 4
Oct. 15	Gustavo Gonzalez, Miami Beach	W 6
Nov. 19	Carlos Velez, Miami Beach	W 8
Dec. 10	Bill Bradley, Miami Beach	W 10
1995		
Feb. 6	Edison Martinez, W. Palm Beach, FL	KO 3
Feb. 25	Carlos Betancourt, Miami Beach	KO 1
March 25	Tyrone Dillard, Miami Beach	KO 1
June 27	John McClendon, Ft. Lauderdale	KO 1
July 22	Carlos Velez, Miami Beach	KO 2
Sept. 8	Melvin Wynn, Miami Beach	KO 4
Nov. 28	Jerome Hill, Augusta, GA	KO 1
1996		
Jan. 16	Bill Bradley, Ft. Lauderdale	KO 1
Feb. 24	Dan Mitchell, Miami	KO 2
March 26	Guy Stanford, Immokalee, FL	KO 2
April 12	Kenny Parker, St. Maarten	KO 3
June 11	James Gatlin, Ledyard, CT	W 6
June 15	Tom Bentley, Nassau, Bahamas	KO 3
July 29	Gerald Reed, Miami	W 8

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KOs
26	26	0	0	17

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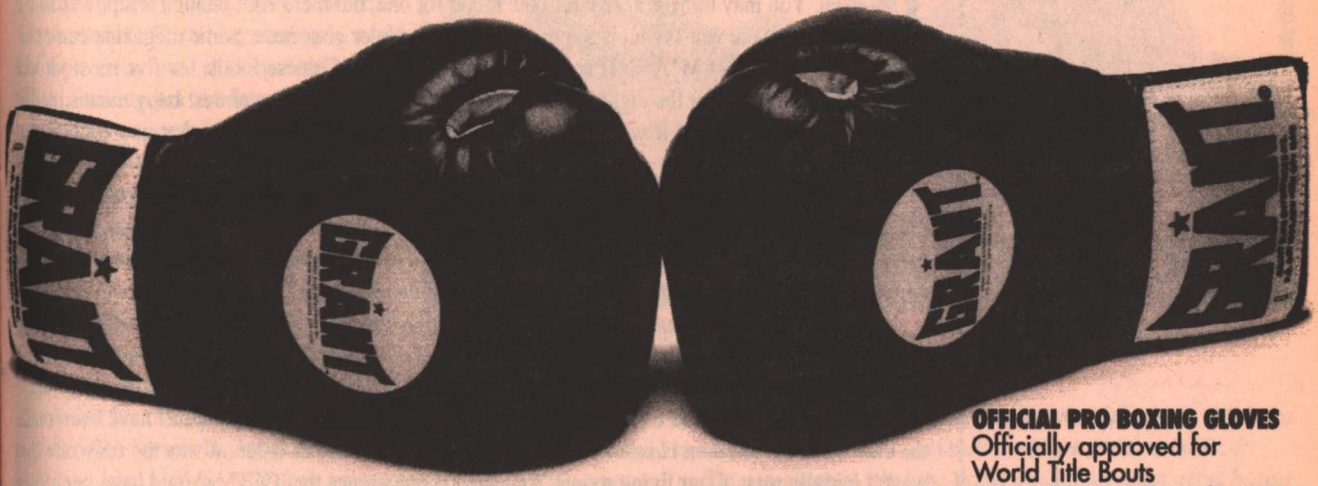

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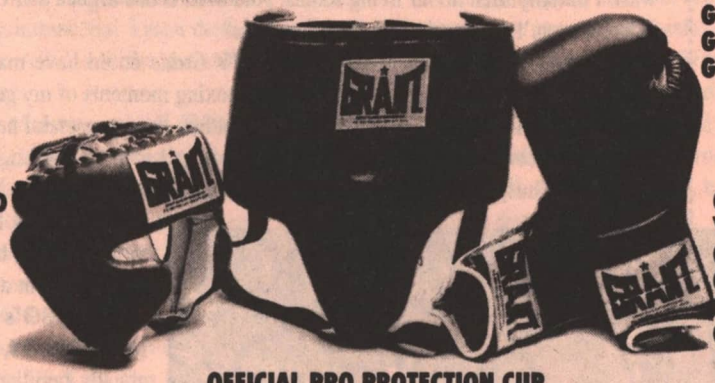

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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

THE DEFINING DOZEN

Lists have an amazing effect on people. They're like chocolate-chip cookies fresh out of the oven. You may think you're not in the mood for one, but there isn't enough willpower in the world to make you say no if someone waves one under your nose. Some magazine can compile a list of the 10 best M*A*S*H episodes or the six saltiest Chinese foods, the five most violent Robert DeNiro movies or the eight best heavy metal guitarists, the 12 weirdest baby names, or the 20 best party colleges, and if you're like most people, curiosity will demand that you eyeball that sucker from top to bottom.

One of the most intriguing lists I've ever seen turned up in a recent issue of *TV Guide,* when the magazine ranked the "100 Most Memorable Moments In TV History." Included was everything from Neil Armstrong walking on the moon to Mork and Mindy having a baby. It all made for fascinating reading, but like all lists, was sure to stir lots of debate.

Some choices were strange, to say the least. (John Belushi's Samurai deli skit on *Saturday Night Live* more memorable than Jack Ruby killing Lee Oswald?) One of the strangest was the lone live boxing entry, Muhammad Ali's 1974 knockout of George Foreman, which placed 54th.

What kind of mis-Guide-d selection was that? First of all, the telecast shouldn't have even made the cut because it aired on *closed-circuit.* Of the hundred broadcasts listed, it was the only one that wasn't initially seen in our living rooms. And even if one argues that CCTV should have been considered, wasn't Ali-Frazier I more memorable?

If boxing were to be represented, then *TV Guide* could have made better choices. Such as? Well, take a look at my list of the top-12 TV boxing moments of my generation.

To qualify for my list, an event had to unfold on the commercial networks, cable, or in syndication. Fight rebroadcasts weren't considered. It had to be something I could vividly remember watching. Thus, Rocky Marciano, Don Dunphy, and the Dumont Network are nowhere to be found. And it had to be not just a memorable moment, but a significant one, too.

Dr. Ferdie Pacheco holds back Muhammad Ali at the tail-end of "The Greatest's" unscheduled wrestling match with arch-enemy Joe Frazier at ABC's studios. Among the onlookers is LeRoy Neiman (middle of photo). Ironically, Ali-Frazier II, five days later, is not as intense.

Count 'em down:

12) HBO's Hector Camacho Profile, November 18, 1983: Though viewers are already familiar with Camacho, he has previously been portrayed as a colorful kid with a wacky wardrobe. On the occasion of his first WBC 130-pound title defense, however, HBO airs a profile that goes a long way toward creating the street punk image that will dog Camacho throughout his career.

Of his sometimes-dirty fighting style, Macho tells HBO, "It's like if you got money and you let me go past and take your money, I'll take it." Later, he adds, "Hey, if I walk down the street and I see a guy beating on a guy with a bat, I go, 'Jesus Christ, hit him again!' That's my attitude."

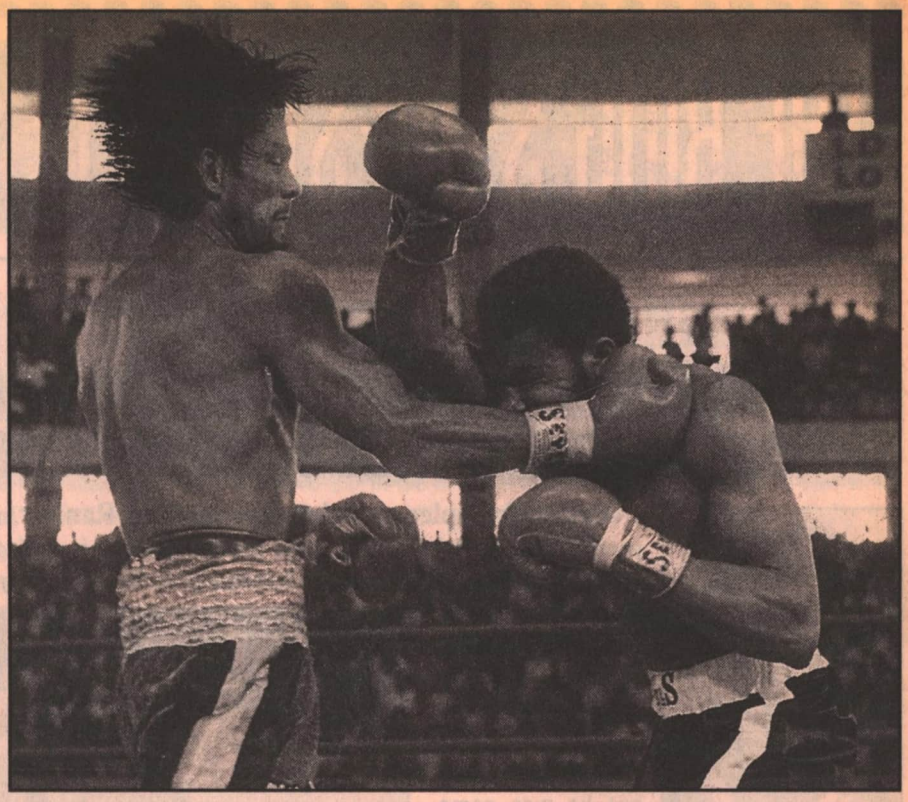
11) Larry Holmes And Gerry Cooney

Have To Be Separated, June 12, 1981: After heavyweight king Holmes stops Leon Spinks, ABC's Howard Cosell attempts to interview the champion and number-one contender Cooney at ringside. Holmes objects to the sight of Cooney and throws a punch at his future challenger. In the melee, Cosell suffers a cut mouth.

In those few frantic seconds, the tone is set for one of history's most divisive matchups.

10) George Foreman Outlasts Ron Lyle, January 24, 1976: Momentum changing every 30 seconds. Both men down twice. Cosell screaming himself hoarse. The bout that epitomizes the most thrilling era the heavyweight division has ever seen.

9) Sugar Ray Leonard Poleaxes Davey Boy Green, March 31, 1980: A stoppage of the great Wilfred Benitez had won over the skeptics. But the moment that turns Sugar into a megastar, thus enabling a welterweight to demand multimillion-dollar purses, comes when he caps a picturesque flurry with a left hook that knocks Green stiff on ABC.



How merciless was Roberto Duran? In March 1975, after the lightweight champion punched Ray Lampkin into unconsciousness on CBS, he promised, "Next time, I'll kill him."

8) Mike Tyson Destroys Marvis Frazier, July 26, 1986: The third of what will be only four commercial network TV appearances in his career is the quintessential Tyson demolition. Frazier crumbles in 30 seconds on ABC, and the mainstream discovers what all the shouting is about.

7) Leon Spinks Upsets Muhammad Ali, February 15, 1978: Not only does a kid with eight pro fights under his waistband topple "The Greatest," but the unified heavyweight title changes hands on home TV (CBS) for the first time in decades.

6) Ali Wins The Rematch, September 15, 1978: Only once has someone captured the heavyweight crown for a third time, and we get to see it live on ABC. Imagine the pricetag a bout with this kind of storyline would command on pay-per-view today.

5) Howard Cosell Calls His Last Pro Fight, November 26, 1982: ABC's Cosell blasts the Holmes-Tex Cobb mismatch during the action, then later says it turned him off to the pro game. The departure costs Cosell credibility, it costs viewers the best ringside mike man who ever lived, and it marks the end of those drama-enhancing one-person broadcasts.

4) Duk Koo Kim Suffers Fatal Injuries, November 13, 1982: Because the damage that will later kill the South Korean is inflicted by a popular star (Ray Mancini) during a widely viewed Saturday matinee (CBS), it prompts the biggest outcry for the sport's abolition in two decades and is the catalyst for improvements in ring safety.

3) Frazier And Ali Brawl In The Studio, January 26, 1974: Five days before Superfight II, the heavyweights join Cosell in ABC's studios to watch a replay of their 1971 battle and provide commentary. After Ali calls Frazier "ignorant," Smokin' Joe gets out of his chair and stands menacingly over his nemesis. Ali leaps to his feet, grabs Frazier, and the two men wrestle on the floor.

Though skeptics label the brawl a publicity stunt, most people in attendance report that Frazier's rage is real. The incident is an early peek at the contempt Frazier holds for Ali, the depth of which won't be truly understood until years later. It also adds to the legend of the most publicized rivalry in boxing history.

The impromptu battle is broadcast on tape two days before Superfight II, which, ironically, turns out to be the least spirited of the pair's three ring encounters.

2) Remorseless Roberto Duran, March 2, 1975: We saw what the Panamanian's hands were made of when he scored a revenge kayo over Esteban DeJesus, but this is the first indication that his heart, too, is made of stone. After Duran leaves Ray Lampkin down and out cold in the 14th round, a CBS audience hears a chilling translation of the victor's postfight comments: "Next time, I'll kill him."

From that afternoon, until his surrender in New Orleans five year later, Duran owns the most menacing aura in the game.

1) Buster Douglas Upsets Mike Tyson, February 11, 1990: The fight game's equivalent of, "Where were you when President Kennedy got shot?" Not just the biggest upset in boxing history, but maybe in the annals of pro sports. It is also the defining moment for HBO, the finest fight outlet ever.

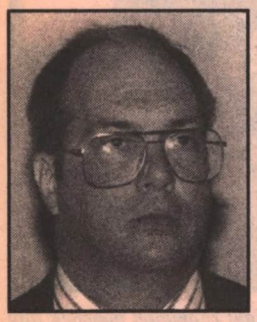
Tokyo features great camera work, superb scene-setting, and announcers Jim Lampley, Larry Merchant, and Ray Leonard mixing the perfect blend of shock and restraint as the drama slowly builds and culminates in that unforgettable closeup of a groggy Tyson shoving his mouthpiece in backward.

Televised boxing's all-time finest hour. ■

THE RING'S QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH

Compiled by Thad Moore

Q: IS ROY JONES DUCKING CERTAIN FIGHTERS, OR IS THERE NO SUITABLE OPPOSITION AVAILABLE?



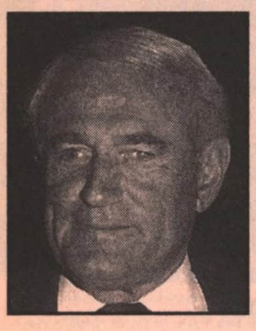
Bruce Trampler, matchmaker for Top Rank: "Jones does not project himself as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world should. When he is putting money in the forefront to [HBO's Jim] Lampley and [Larry] Merchant, he is focusing on the wrong thing. He should say, 'I want to fight the best fighters out there.' He demeans himself by fighting guys like Eric Lucas.

"Lucas was outclassed in the fight, but he was game. Jones is not the best fighter in the world based on his last performance. He needs to upgrade his level of competition. Virgil Hill could not beat Roy Jones. It would be no contest. Hill is tough, but could not beat Jones. I think someone like Henry Maske would present problems for him. That would be a solid fight.

"His toughest opponents would be Maske and a motivated James Toney, in shape and focused. Toney could be Roy's toughest fight. The thing Roy has to do is reassess what he is doing and where he is going. Playing hoops on the day of a fight is disrespectful. That is what he has to work on most—reestablishing himself as a great fighter."

Roy Jones was heavily criticized for defending the IBF super middleweight title against limited Canadian Eric Lucas. Is there suitable opposition at Jones' weight?

Q: WHAT IS THE MOST EXCITING DIVISION IN BOXING?



Gil Clancy, CBS boxing analyst: "The most exciting division is definitely welterweight. The best fighters out there are Pernell Whitaker, Felix Trinidad, Oscar De La Hoya, and Ike Quartey. I think Quartey is the best of the group. He puts his punches together well and hits very hard. He already has the best left jab in the business. Quartey is an all-around solid fighter. He doesn't have any weaknesses.

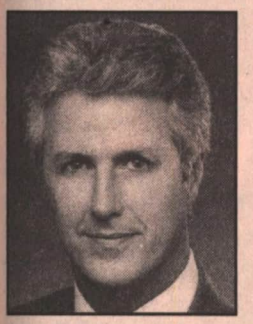
"Trinidad is very young. He fights aggressively and punches in combination. If he fought Whitaker, I would make it a toss-up.

"With the southpaw stance, Whitaker is difficult to fight. He is one of the most elusive fighters since the days of Willie Pep. And he's the most experienced [of the current welterweight champions].

"De La Hoya is still maturing. Right now he's a junior welterweight. Soon he'll move up to welterweight. De La Hoya will win a fight with Whitaker, who didn't look too good in his last fight."

What do boxing's insiders think of the hot issues? Each month, we'll come up with four or five questions, then grill the experts. If there's a topic you'd like examined, send your question to The Ring, Questions Of The Month, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034

Q: SHOULD EVANDER HOLYFIELD CONTINUE FIGHTING?



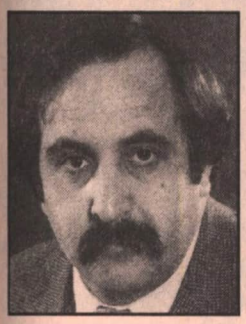
Alex Wallau, ABC boxing analyst: "To me, the choice as to whether to fight or not is up to the fighter. It is not my decision to make. I believe that in the first and third [Riddick] Bowe fights, Holyfield was a shadow of himself. After both of those fights he said he was going to retire. Maybe Evander fights for reasons other than the money at this point.

"I don't think he will ever again be a major force at the higher levels of the heavyweight division. He has been truly one of the finest fighters of our generation. Evander has been a tremendous overachiever. He has always prepared himself in training to give fans the best. I am a huge fan.

"I don't think he's a natural heavyweight. He has been successful by his performance, and not by his mouth. He is a throwback fighter. I, for one, will be sorry to see him go when he does leave.

"In terms of performance, Holyfield has been on a steady decline. I accept the doctors' rediagnosis, and Holyfield being cleared to fight. Still, he'll be a huge longshot against Tyson. I expect it to be a quick kayo."

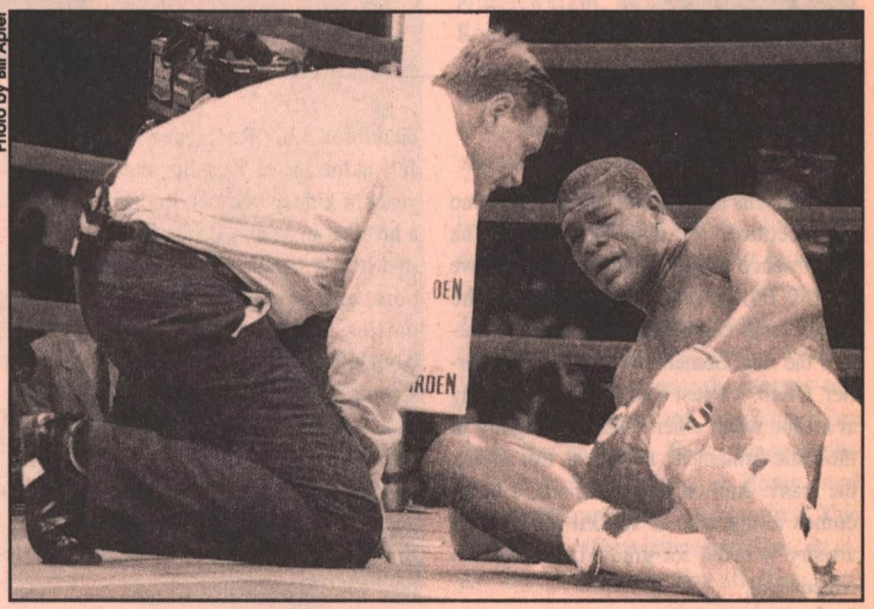
Q: WHO WOULD WIN A RIDDICK BOWE-ANDREW GOLOTA REMATCH?



Cedric Kushner, promoter: "I would have to say that Golota will improve upon his performance in the first fight. He would have a good chance to do as well as he did. The first fight was a big surprise to all of us who saw it. I have always thought that Bowe is the only person capable of beating Mike Tyson.

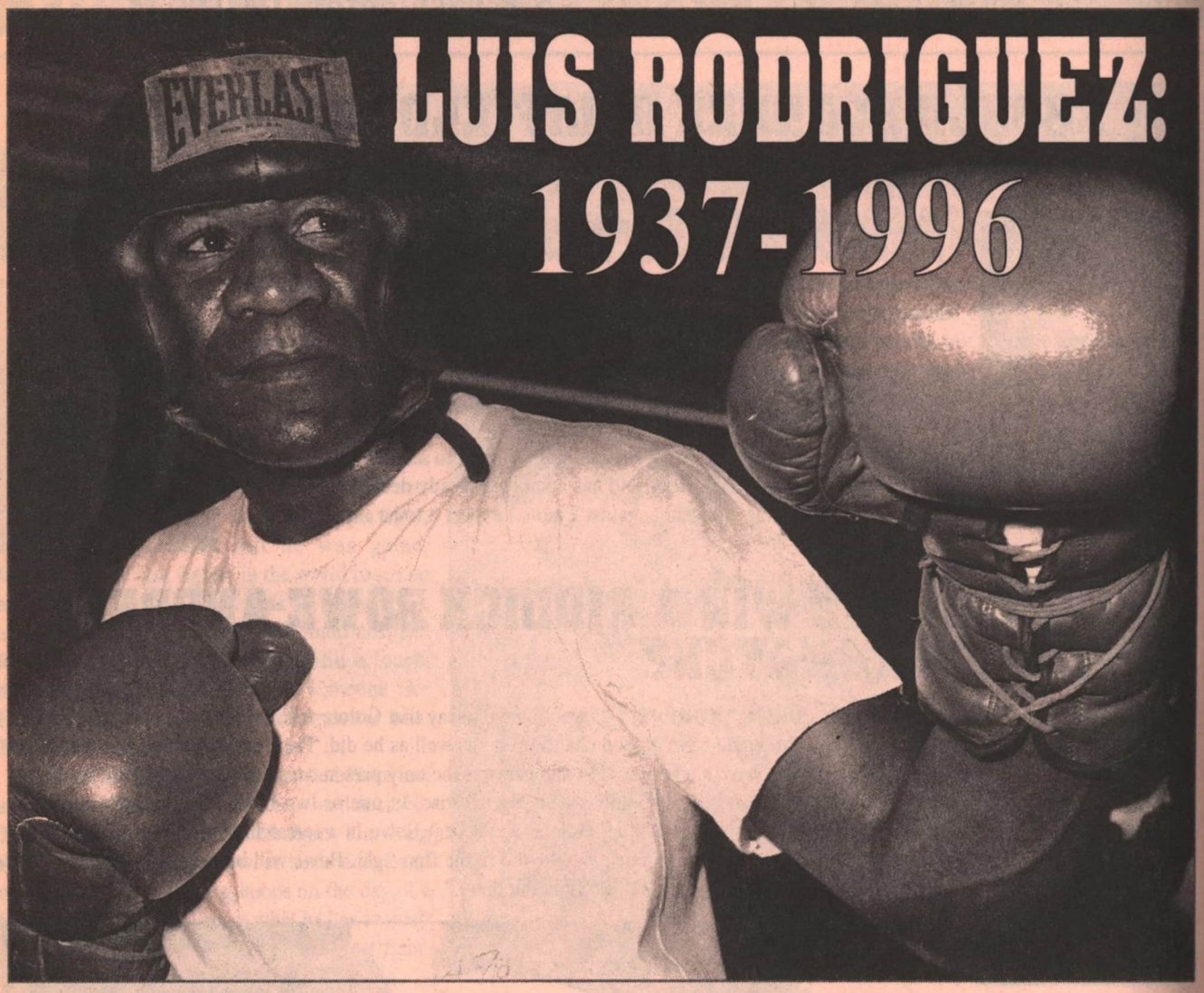
"Bowe being manhandled by Golota was a big surprise. In one or two more rounds, Golota probably would have knocked Bowe out. I think Golota would beat Bowe in a rematch. I have a lot of respect for Bowe. I don't think he'll look the same way he did in the first fight. Bowe will be prepared. If he comes in in good shape, the Golota fight is the best fight out there."

Photo by Bill Apter



Had Andrew Golota not been disqualified for repeatedly hitting Riddick Bowe low, he might have knocked out the former heavyweight champion. Who would win a rematch?

An Underappreciated Artist



LUIS RODRIGUEZ: 1937-1996

By Jim Trunzo

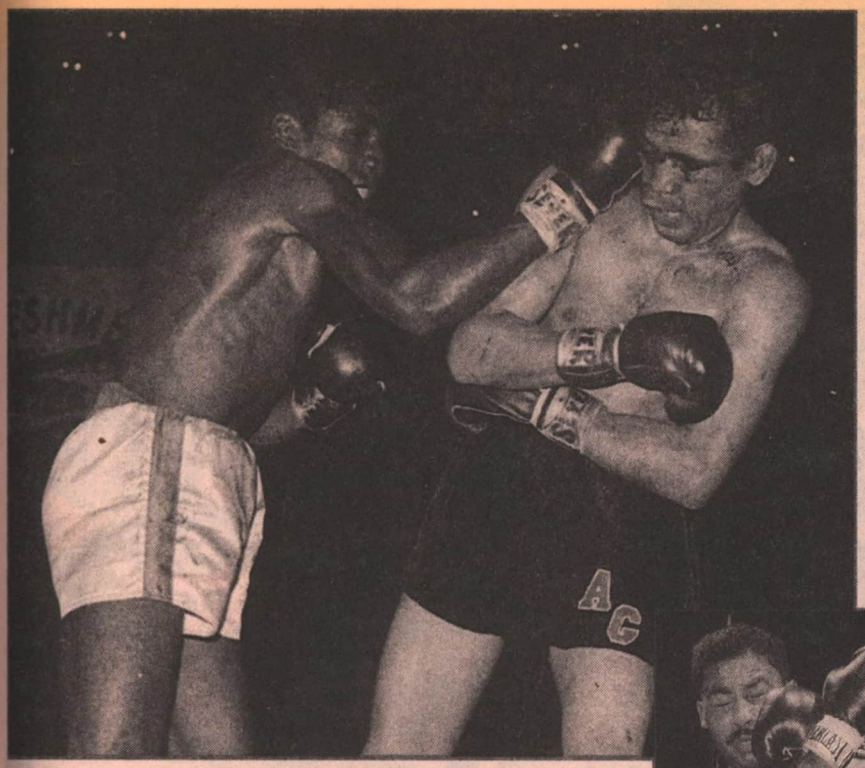
It happens in all sports, and boxing is no exception: We find ourselves in the presence of one of the greats, and we simply fail to recognize it. Maybe the fighter lacks charisma, either inside or outside the ring. Sometimes language is a barrier. Often, it's just a case of a star shining at a time when others blaze as brightly in the fistic firmament; the one is lost among the many. And on rare occasions, a boxer comes along who is so skillful that his artistry is taken for granted, if acknowledged at all.

So it was with former welterweight champion Luis Rodriguez, who died in July at the age of 59. After undergoing two years of kidney dialysis, Rodriguez died at a hospital in Miami Beach. His death merited half a column in the major newspapers, and hardly a mention in smaller dailies. The lack of media attention wouldn't have surprised the modest, unassuming Rodriguez.

Luis Manuel Rodriguez turned pro in Cuba and came to the USA in 1959 for a fight with former welterweight king Virgil Akins. He won a 10-round decision, established residence, and campaigned here until his retirement in 1972.

A quick look at the Cuban's record speaks volumes about the man: 107 wins in 121 fights, almost half of the victories by knockout. Yet, in truth, it says next to nothing in the case of Rodriguez. The lines of black-and-white agate type in a record book fail to paint an accurate picture of this master boxer, in the squared circle or out. But the men who knew Rodriguez were more than willing to add color.

Listen to Angelo Dundee, who trained Rodriguez during the height of the fighter's career: "Happy, happy guy. Just a wonderful person. A joy to be around. Muhammad Ali loved Luis because Luis was always smiling and laughing, and you could see some of Luis come out in Ali's personality



Rodriguez was 28-0 when he stopped Alvaro Gutierrez after four rounds at the Olympic Auditorium in April 1960 (above). The Cuban's biggest win, a March 1963 decision over Emile Griffith (below), made him world welterweight champion. It was his only victory in four bouts vs. Griffith. After losing the title, Rodriguez remained a contender for the better part of a decade. In October 1963, he outpointed Olympic hero Skeeter McClure at Madison Square Garden (right).

as he developed."

Dundee is equally effusive when discussing Rodriguez' boxing ability. "Someone asks me about Luis Rodriguez, I think of the man first and the fighter second," he said. "But, hey, he was a hell of a fighter. He was the finest thing that came out of Cuba. Great, man! Classy fighter. I always compared him to a pogo stick: bounce, bounce, bounce. Here, there, in front of you, gone. Rodriguez was so smooth that he could bang inside—he was a tremendous bodypuncher—and be gone before the other guy could fire back. Luis frustrated Hurricane Carter so badly that Carter tried to pick him up and throw Luis out of the ring!

"Keep in mind, Luis was just a skinny welterweight, but he'd fight anybody. He fought all the tough middleweights that nobody else wanted to fight. Carter was a middleweight, Bennie Briscoe [whom Rodriguez beat twice], George Benton. Anyway, Luis was already a little past his prime, but he'd fought his way to the top of the middleweight rankings and landed a championship fight with Nino Benvenuti.

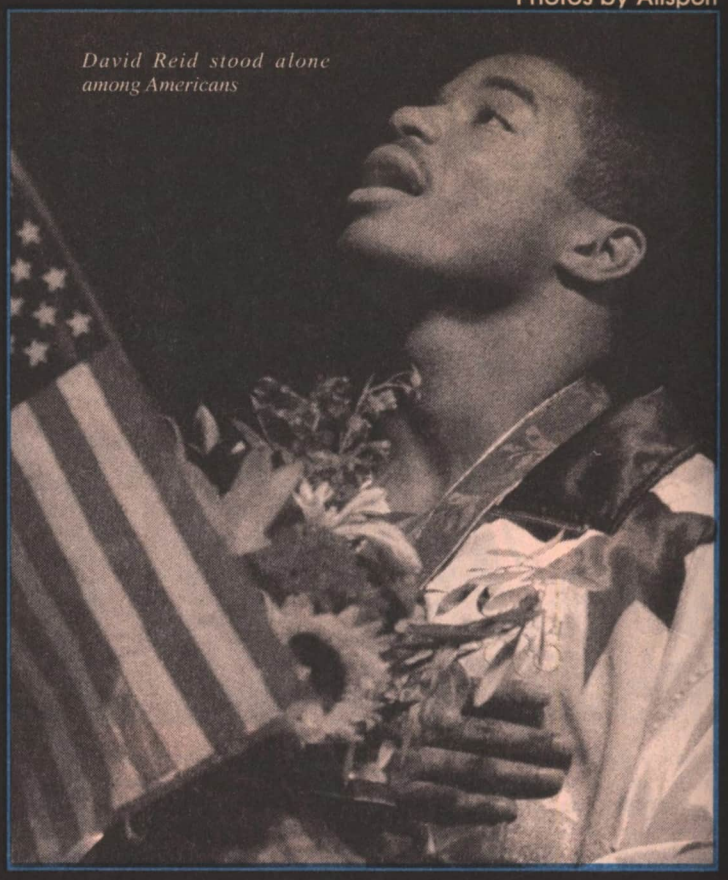
"Luis is winning every round, boxing beautifully, and I tell him, 'Just keep doing what you're doing,' but Luis says that he's going to knock out Benvenuti. The 11th round starts and Luis looks to throw a right. Benvenuti throws a wild left hook—both his feet leave the canvas—and if Nino would've missed, he'd have fallen down. But he didn't. Now, you gotta picture this. The fight's in Rome, and Benvenuti is a national treasure there. This little Italian referee jumps over Luis, straddles him, and starts rattling off, 'Uno, duo,

(Continued on page 54)

Olympic Recap:

WHEN ALL WAS TOLD, ONLY ONE GOLD

Photos by Allsport



David Reid stood alone among Americans

Compiled by Steve Farhood

NBC all but ignored the Sweet Science during the network's broadcast of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. But with Muhammad Ali lighting the torch at the opening ceremonies and David Reid landing a golden punch on the closing day of competition, boxing—and boxers—maintained a strong presence.

The U.S. medal tally was one gold (David Reid) and five bronzes (Nate Jones, Antonio Tarver, Roshii Wells, Terrance Cauthen, and Floyd Mayweather), an improvement on the 1992 Games, when the USA took home one gold, one silver, and one bronze. How unlikely was Reid's face-saving kayo victory? Consider that in 343 bouts in Atlanta, no other fighter trailing on points came back to stop his opponent.

The competition, of course, included its share of controversy. One judge, Tunisia's Youssef Chaalia, was dismissed by AIBA, international amateur boxing's ruling body, for what was perceived to be improper scoring. And another, the USA's Bill Waeckerle, resigned from AIBA following Floyd Mayweather's disputed loss to Serafim Todorov, citing "a blatant example of incompetent officiating." The computerized scoring system didn't draw as much criticism as in Barcelona, but it remains confusing to everyone.

All considered, it wasn't a particularly memorable competition. From the USA's perspective, the Olympic boxing experience can be summed up in five words: Thank heavens for David Reid.

Super Heavyweight: LAWRENCE CLAY-BEY

July 27 Vladimir Klitchko (Ukraine) ..... L 3

Larry Donald was a bust in Barcelona, but at least his loss came against eventual gold medal winner ... Team captain and medal favorite Clay-Bey, 30, lost in first fight ... Before bout, was quoted by *New York Post* as saying (in reference to the pipe bomb that exploded at Centennial Olympic Park), "People keep asking me is it important to me to win the gold medal? And I keep thinking, *No, it's important for me to go home*" ... Led Klitchko 2-1 after one round, but switch-hitter faded in round three, despite landing right uppercut that led to standing eight-count ... "Smile, it's not the end of the world," he told press afterward ... A corrections officer, he's indicated he's not likely to turn pro.

Gold Medal Winner: Vladimir Klitchko (Ukraine)

Heavyweight: NATE JONES

July 25 Fola Okesola (Great Britain) ..... TKO 3
July 30 Tao Jiang (China) ..... W 3
Aug. 1 David Defiagbon (Canada) ..... L 3

In early-'90s, Jones served 20-month sentence for auto theft; now 23-year-old Chicagoan is bronze medal winner ... Came for-

ward vs. 6'5" Defiagbon, but took standing-eight in first and lost 16-10 ... "I tried my best," he said. "I just couldn't get around his jab" ... Halted Okesola with seven seconds remaining in sloppy opening bout; led 15-3 at time of stoppage ... Used right uppercuts to defeat reluctant Jiang 21-4 ... Fought with spirit throughout, but will have to increase power as pro.

Gold Medal Winner: Felix Savon (Cuba)

Light Heavyweight:
ANTONIO TARVER

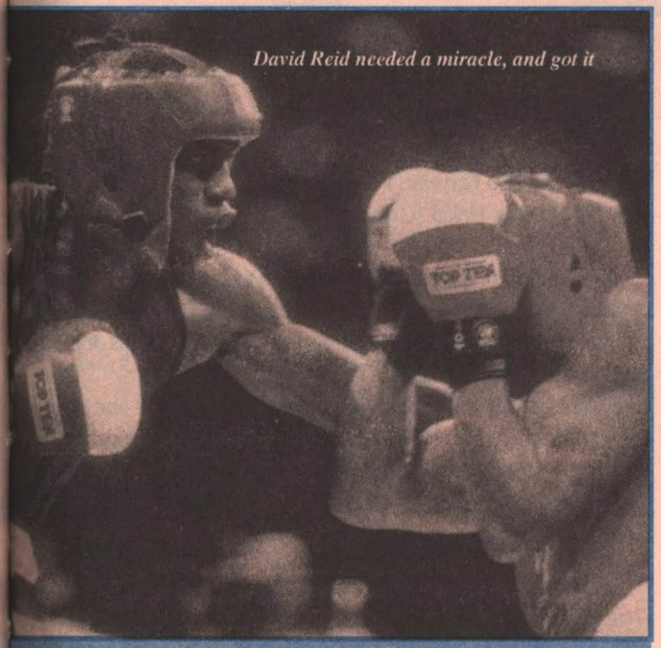
July 24	**Dmitri Vybornov (Russia)**	**W 3**
July 28	**David Kowah (Sierra Leone)**	**TKO 1**
July 31	**Enrique Flores (Puerto Rico)**	**TKO 3**
Aug. 2	**Vassili Jirov (Kazakhstan)**	**L 3**

USA's best bet for gold, and self-proclaimed "Nation's Sensation," Tarver, 27, came home with bronze after being upset 15-9 by fellow southpaw Jirov, whom he had beaten in 1995 ... Pinned Jirov against ropes in second round, but scored only two points and trailed 9-8 with three minutues to go... Tired badly in fast-paced third ... "I'm not putting this off on the scoring system," he said. "I lost tonight" ... Sleepwalked through first bout, during which he was booed, defeating Vybornov, another left-hander, 5-2 ... Crushed Kowah, and led Flores 18-3 when bout was stopped at 1:54 mark of third ... Committment to conditioning remains question mark ... Style was suited for amateurs ... ... Indicated he may not turn pro.

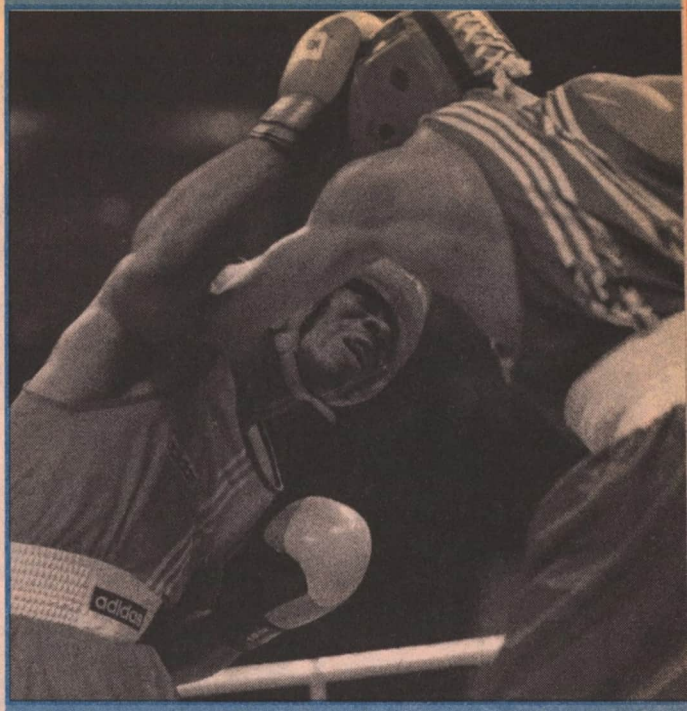
Gold Medal Winner: Vassili Jirov (Kazakhstan)

Middleweight:
ROSHII WELLS

July 22	**Sefid Dashti K. Mollal (Iran)**	**W 3**
July 26	**Ricardo Rodriguez (Brazil)**	**W 3**
July 30	**Dilshood Yarbekov (Uzbekistan)**	**W 3**
Aug. 1	**Ariel Hernandez (Cuba)**	**L 3**



David Reid needed a miracle, and got it



Nate Jones couldn't handle taller Canadian opponent

Nineteen-year-old who has been sponsored by fellow Georgian Evander Holyfield did well in winning bronze ... Had no chance of defeating Hernandez, arguably greatest amateur in world ... Got dropped in first round and lost by 15-8 ... Had temerity to call legendary conqueror "ordinary" after bout ... Breezed early, defeating Mollal 24-7 and Rodriguez 16-2 ... Tied score at 8-8 vs. Yarbekov with eight seconds left, then was declared victor by raw score of 49-45 ... Young and promising, he has bright future.

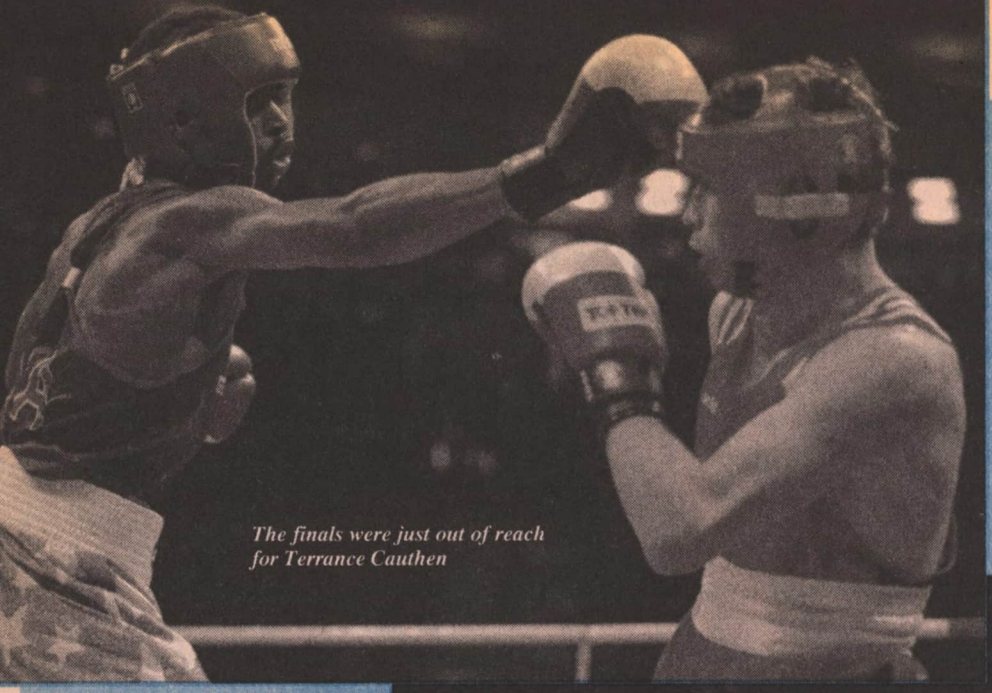
Gold Medal Winner: Ariel Hernandez (Cuba)

Light Middleweight:
DAVID REID

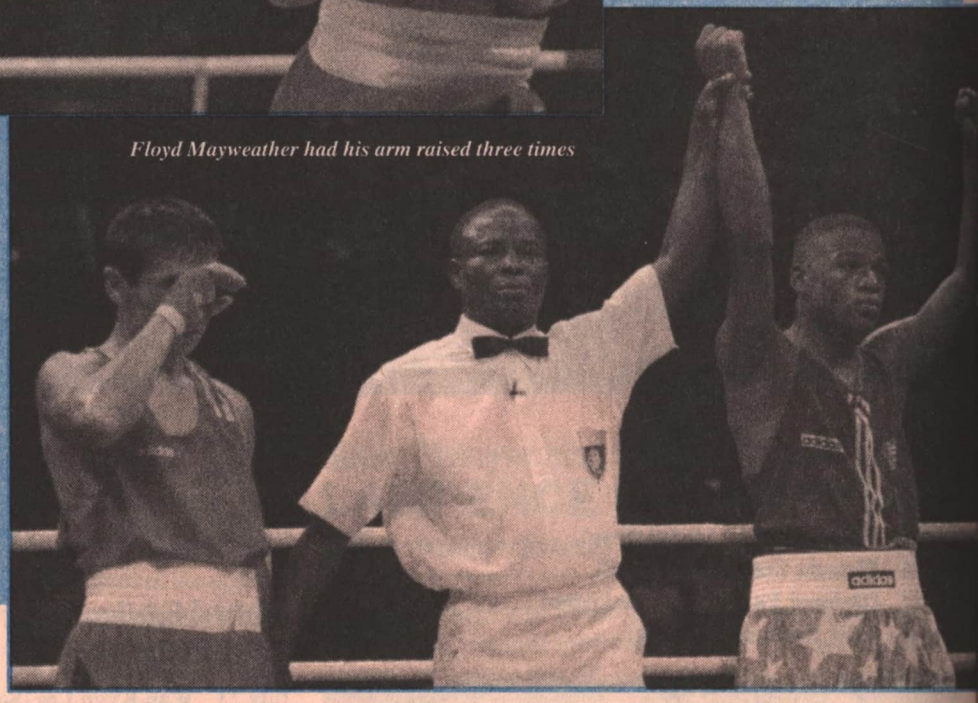
July 23	**Wan Kyun Lee (South Korea)**	**W 3**
July 27	**Pavol Polakovic (Czech Republic)**	**W 3**
July 31	**Mohamed Salah Marmouri (Tunisia)**	**W 3**
Aug. 2	**Karim Tulaganov (Uzbekistan)**	**W 3**
Aug. 4	**Alfredo Duvergel (Cuba)**	**KO 3**

Miracle stoppage of Duvergel resulted in red-white-and-blue's only gold (With exception of 1948, USA has won at least one gold medal in every Olympic boxing competition it entered) ... Philadelphia's Reid, 22, was trailing 15-5 after two rounds ... Thirty seconds into third, Cuban southpaw fired a left, and Reid countered with overhand right ... *Boom!* ... Duvergel rose, then stumbled, and bout was halted at 35-second mark ... "I was going for the home run," said Reid. "I knew I was down 10 points, but all I needed was to get one in" ... Won first four bouts by scores of (in order) 20-4, 12-5, 13-8, and 12-4 ... Eye surgery will delay start of pro career ... Is likely to sign with Top Rank and manager Stan Hoffman.

Gold Medal Winner: David Reid (USA)



The finals were just out of reach for Terrance Cauthen



Floyd Mayweather had his arm raised three times

Welterweight: FERNANDO VARGAS

July 20 Tenzig Meskhadze (Georgia) ..... W 3
July 25 Marian Simion (Romania) ..... L 3

A medal favorite, 18-year-old Californian outscored southpaw Meskhadze 10-4 ... Unexpected loss to Simion was among competition's most controversial decisions; judges' raw totals saw Vargas ahead by 50-42 ... Led Romanian 4-2 after round one, but was outpointed 5-0 in disastrous second, and went on to lose by 8-7 ... Deciding blow was registered with 24 seconds remaining in third ... "No disrespect, but I feel cheated," he said ... Added assistant coach Jessie Ravelo, "Seven points for the whole bout? Something is wrong" ... Was team member most ardently wooed by pros ... Will likely be promoted by Top Rank.

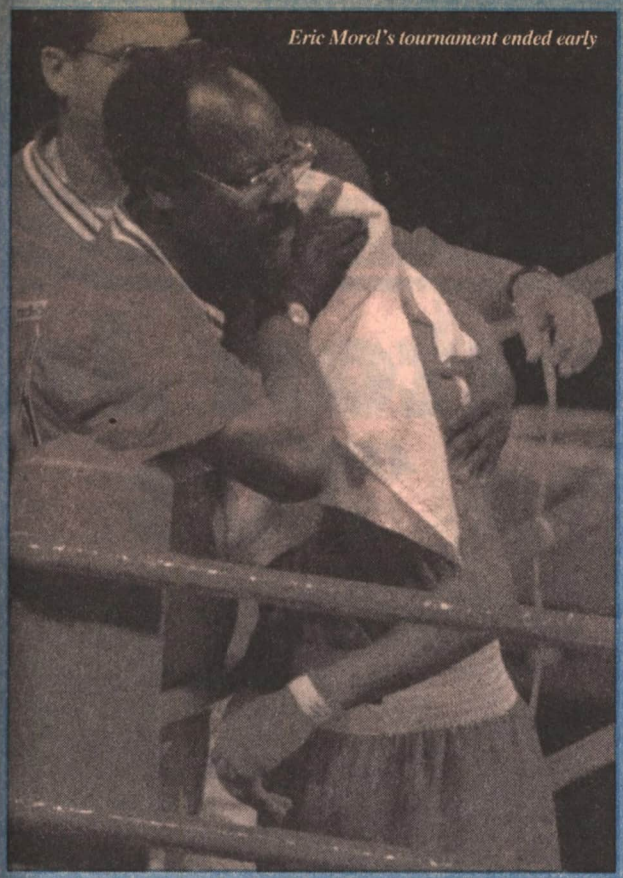
Gold Medal Winner: Oleg Saitov (Russia)

Light Welterweight: DAVID DIAZ

July 24 Jacobo Garcia (Virgin Islands) ..... TKO 3
July 28 Oktay Urkel (Germany) ..... L 3

In talent-laden division, 20-year-old Diaz, unranked at start of Olympic Trials, wasn't expected to medal ... First bout was a gimme; aggressive Chicagoan led by 25-2 when Garcia was rescued at 2:27 mark of third ... Fell behind vs. 27-year-old Urkel, and when he tried to rally, bigger German stubbornly and repeatedly held ... Final score was 14-6 ... "This was my medal fight," said Diaz. "I guess I just didn't have what it takes" ... Not the type to land long, clean blows, and is better suited for pros.

Gold Medal Winner: Hector Vinent (Cuba)



Eric Morel's tournament ended early

Lightweight: TERRANCE CAUTHEN

July 21	Mahamatkodir Abdullaev (Uzbekistan)	W 3
July 26	Tumentsetsec Ultumen (Mongolia)	W 3
July 30	Veongviact Phongsit (Thailand)	W 3
Aug. 1	Tontcho Tontchev (Bulgaria)	L 3

Twenty-year-old Philadelphia southpaw boxed well before losing in semis by 15-12 to Tontchev, a victim of Oscar De La Hoya at 1992 Games ... Trailed Bulgarian by 9-7 after two rounds, but began slapping ... "Both guys were throwing wild shots, haymakers," said head coach Al Mitchell ... Outscored Abdullaev 18-6, Ultumen 10-9, and fellow left-hander Phongsit 14-10 ... Was booed vs. Ultumen, but Mitchell knew score and signaled to Cauthen to dance ... Will turn pro under guidance of Joe and Marvis Frazier.

Gold Medal Winner: Hocine Soltani (Algeria)

Featherweight: FLOYD MAYWEATHER

July 22	Bakhtiyar Tileganov (Kazakhstan)	TKO 2
July 27	Artur Gevorgyan (Armenia)	W 3
July 31	Lorenzo Aragon (Cuba)	W 3
Aug. 2	Serafim Todorov (Bulgaria)	L 3

Superbly talented 125-pounder won bronze, but 10-9 loss to two-time world champion Todorov in semis was among most controversial in Games ... "You all know who the real world champion is," said Mayweather, 19. "*I'm* the gold medalist" ... Wasn't credited for several scoring blows, including two punches in last 15 seconds, either of which would have tied score ... Stopped Tileganov at 57-second mark of second, outpointed Gevorgyan 16-3, and edged Aragon 12-11 (USA's first win over Cuba since the 1976 Games) ... Hot commodity figures to make potentially great pro ... Is high on wish list of Main Events.

Gold Medal Winner: Somluck Kamsing (Thailand)

Bantamweight: ZAHIR RAHEEM

July 20	Ho Jong Gil (North Korea)	W 3
July 25	Arnaldo Mesa (Cuba)	TKO by 1

Speedy 19-year-old Philadelphian staggered southpaw Gil 20 seconds into first round en route to 19-4 win ... Luck of draw next pitted him vs. seasoned Mesa, who had dropped down from 125 after defection of Joel Casamayor ... Was dropped by 28-year-old southpaw in first, and was trailing 5-1 when ref called halt at 2:15 mark ... Collapsed to canvas and openly wept, then refused to shake winner's hand and stormed from ring ... "He's 19; he feels that was the end of the world for him," said Mitchell ... Has signed with Main Events, and co-managers Shelly Finkel and Lou Duva.

Gold Medal Winner: Istvan Kovacs (Hungary)

Flyweight: ERIC MOREL

July 23	Maikro Romero (Cuba)	L 3

Sports Illustrated picked Puerto Rican-born 20-year-old to come home with bronze, but magazine's prognosticators might have reconsidered had they known he would be matched with Cuban in first round ... Allowed Romero to initiate attack and fell behind 9-1 after one round ... Fought well in second and third, but never threatened to catch up, losing by score of 24-12 ... Longshot for big-time success as pro.

Gold Medal Winner: Maikro Romero (Cuba)

Light Flyweight: ALBERT GUARDADO

July 21	Healer Modiradilo (Botswana)	W 3
July 26	Anicet Rasonnaivo (Madagascar)	W 3
July 30	Oleg Kirukhin (Ukraine)	L 3

Twenty-three-year-old college student's international experience didn't help in quarterfinal match vs. Kirukhin, who outpointed him 19-14 ... Guardado trailed 15-14 with 1:40 left, but faded down stretch ... "That European style gave me trouble," he said. "I couldn't get [Kirukhin] off me. I was hoping to get some holding calls against him, but I didn't get them" ... Defeated free-swinging Modiradilo, Botswana's only entry, by 11-9, and topped Rasonnaivo 9-4 ... Will turn pro, but not likely to make much of impact.

Gold Medal Winner: Daniel Bojilov Petrov (Bulgaria) ■

A DECADE TO REMEMBER

Harold Weston Jr. Relives The '70s

What was it like to fight the best? In this five-part feature, Robert Cassidy, a frequent contributor to THE RING, interviews one fighter from each of the last five decades.

This month: Harold Weston Jr., a welterweight contender in the '70s

Harold Weston Sr. first brought his son to Gil Clancy's New York City Parks and Recreation Department Gym when the precocious pug was just nine years old. By the time he was 17, Weston Jr. had won a New York Golden Gloves title and was ready to turn pro.

With Clancy and his father in his corner, he debuted in 1970, and fought professionally until 1979. He entered the welterweight division's top 10 in 1975, and remained a fixture in the world rankings until a detached retina forced him to retire. His career record: 29-9-5 (6).

Although he wasn't a dangerous puncher, Weston was a brilliant boxer. He turned pro when boxing was in a recession and retired just when it had begun booming again.

"I think what changed boxing in the 1970s was cable-television and Sugar Ray Leonard and the 1976 Olympic boxing team," said Weston. "Before cable-television, Madison Square Garden was the mecca, and if you weren't fighting at the Garden, you weren't making any money."

Weston was a top contender at the beginning of what was to be a Golden Age for welterweights. Wilfred Benitez, Thomas Hearns, Pipino Cuevas, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Roberto Duran carried the division to new heights. Weston tested some of the best, swapping punches with Benitez, a Hall of Famer, Hearns, a certain Hall of Famer once he retires, and Cuevas, who debuted on the Hall of Fame ballot last year.

He also met a variety of other top contenders and world champions, such as Vito Antuofermo, Rocky Mattioli, Bruno Arcari, Saoul Mamby, and Hedgemon Lewis. When Weston retired from the ring, he entered the business side of the sport as a matchmaker for Madison Square Garden Boxing and later became an independent fight promoter. He still promotes on occasion, but is now focusing on producing two movies. He expects to meet with several interested Hollywood studios later this year.

"I'm in the entertainment world now," said Weston. "This movie business is tough. The boxing business was easy compared to this."

The 44-year-old Weston, who still lives in New York City, reflects upon his career with satisfaction and pride. He has no regrets. He was a man with a passion for boxing, both before and after his career.

"I can say one thing," said Weston. "I had a ball. I loved boxing. I loved to fight. It just wasn't meant for me to be a world champion."

•Like Weston, **Vito Antuofermo** won a Golden Gloves title in 1970. While Weston was in Fort Hood, Texas, serving in the Army, Antuofermo was a popular, fast-rising star on the New York fight circuit.

Antuofermo was 17-0-1 and Weston 15-4-1 when they met on July 9, 1973, at Madison Square Garden's Felt Forum. It was Weston's first fight since May '72.

"I was in the service," he said, "and a friend of mine used to send me copies of THE RING. So I started reading about how well Vito was doing. I remembered him from the Gloves. I called my father and told him I wanted to fight Vito. He called back the next day after talking to Teddy Brenner and the fight was made. I was an assistant boxing coach, so I had time to train, and I was sparring with the amateur kids in the Army. When it came closer to the fight, I went home on leave for better sparring.

Weston's best shot at winning a world title came in March 1979, when he challenged WBC welterweight champion Wilfred Benitez in San Juan. A late rally enabled Benitez to retain the title by a close unanimous decision. Two years earlier, they fought to a draw.

Weston says Hedgemon Lewis was the best fighter he ever faced. The boxing masters struggled to a 10-round draw in December 1975. "He made me think about everything I did," Weston said.

In what turned out to be the last bout of his 10-year career, Weston was stopped in six rounds by up-and-coming contender Thomas Hearns. Weston suffered a detached retina in the bout.

"The contract for our fight was 153 pounds. Back then, Vito was going back and forth from welterweight to junior middleweight. I was in excellent shape and was very high to fight him. I knew Vito would come right at me. Vito was very determined and had a lot of stamina. He had a big heart, a great chin, and was as relentless as any fighter I have ever seen. But I knew I could outbox him and I knew he would bleed.

"In the second round, I was boxing him and I busted his left eye wide-open. As the fight went on, Gil and my father just told me to keep boxing him. In the fifth round, I really opened up and the eye started bleeding badly. The ref stopped the fight. They had to stop it. That was a big win for me."

•Weston accepted a bout with future junior middleweight champion **Rocky Mattioli** just days after fighting to a disputed draw with top-10 welterweight Johnny Gant. That fight was in Gant's hometown of Washington, D.C., and the Mattioli fight was in the Italian's adopted hometown of Melbourne. Four fights earlier, Mattioli had stopped former welterweight champion Billy Backus. When they met on September 19, 1975, Weston was 16-6-2 and Mattioli 37-2-1. Weston won a 10-round decision. Less than two years later, Mattioli won the WBC super welter-

(Continued on page 56)

THE MUDDLED HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION

You Got Questions, We Got Answers

By Steve Farhood

The face of the heavyweight division can change from sunrise to sunset. (See Douglas KO 10 Tyson or Foreman KO 10 Moorer.) That makes it difficult for a monthly magazine like THE RING to analyze the big boys in a timely fashion. But in another sense, things seem to never change. For instance, George Foreman is still active but inactive, and Riddick Bowe and Lennox Lewis are still talking about fighting each other—but only talking.

In this feature, we've attempted to answer some of the questions we hear most often. We've covered most of the division's biggest names and tackled most of the pressing issues. We've started with Mike Tyson and finished with Butterbean. Everyone else, we're sure you'll agree, fits somewhere in between.

1. Will Mike Tyson give up the WBC title?

As much as Don King would like to subtitle Tyson's matchups *All In The Family*, and as much as the WBC would like its mandatory challenger, Lennox Lewis, to quietly disappear, the likelihood of a Tyson-Lewis battle in early-1997 is as strong as ever. (As we went to press, Tyson was scheduled to challenge WBA champion Bruce Seldon on September 7.) Politics aside, Tyson values the three major championship belts, and among his priorities is reunifying the title.

How important is it for Tyson to keep the WBC title? "It's much more important than you'd ever hear Mike Tyson say," John Horne, Tyson's co-manager, told THE RING. "Mike's heart and soul is into being the only heavyweight champion of the world. He wants to be considered the best. It's the only thing that really matters. Everything in us would love to hold on to that belt. The only way we'd give it up is if the whole situation was so overwhelming that the negatives in keeping it began to outweigh the positives."

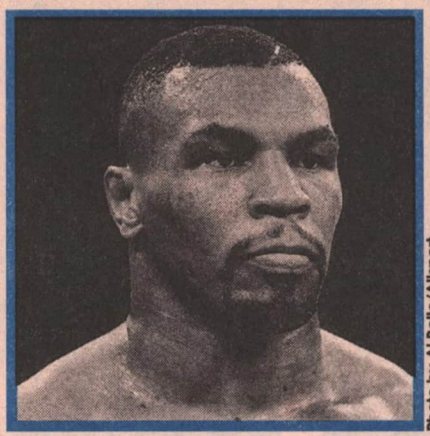


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Mike Tyson

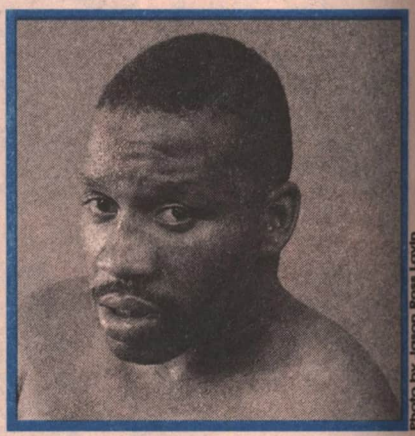
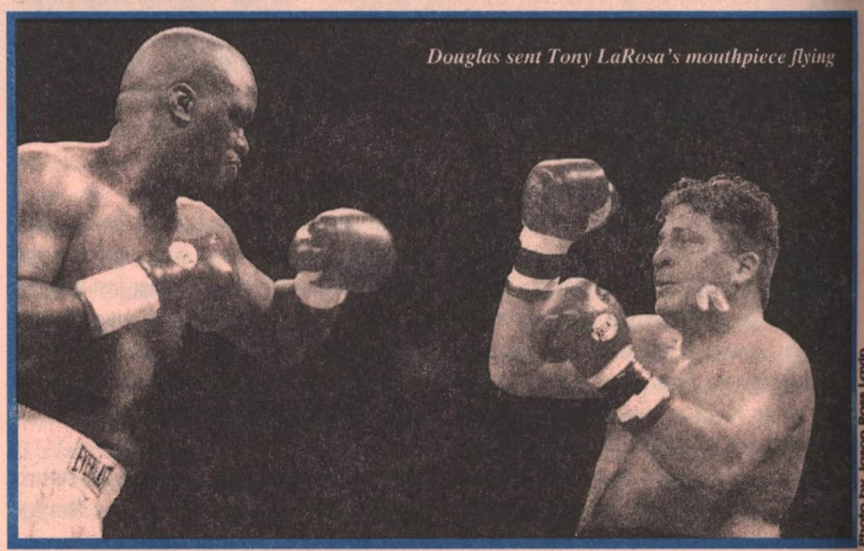


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Tim Witherspoon



Douglas sent Tony LaRosa's mouthpiece flying

Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

2. Is Buster Douglas' comeback to be taken seriously?

In an interview conducted before the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, 1976

decathalon gold medalist Bruce Jenner marveled at the fact that, in essence, he's lived off one glorious accomplishment for 20 years. Douglas can relate. Because he kayoed Mike Tyson in 1990, and because he remains the only fighter to have defeated "Iron Mike," he'll be a major player for as long as he's active and winning.

Douglas looked reasonably good—and relatively fit—in his comeback bout vs. Tony LaRosa. We wouldn't have bet on Douglas before his fight with Tyson, but we'll wager this week's paycheck that before his second career is over, Big Bus will engage in at least one more Big Fight.

"If you go back through time," said John Russell, Douglas' trainer, "every fight like Leonard-Duran and Ali-Frazier is always followed by a rematch. I cannot foresee Douglas-Tyson II not happening. That's the [big] fight I see."

3. Tim Witherspoon is being ducked by several top-ranked heavyweights. Who will his big fight likely come against?

Would you believe Andrew Golota? Here's the thinking: 'Spoon isn't going to secure a world title shot. (As ridiculous as it seems, he's not even ranked in the top 10 of the three major alphabet organizations.) If bad blood and promotional conflicts at least temporarily prevent a Golota-Riddick Bowe rematch from being made, who is Golota supposed to fight next? HBO wants the Polish heavyweight back, and the network has committed itself to Witherspoon, so...

"We think there's a chance," said Tom Moran, Witherspoon's adviser. "If [Main Events, Golota's promoter] doesn't want to deal with Rock Newman [Bowe's manager], what other big fight is out there for Golota? Of all the heavyweights out there, we deserve a big fight, and the public would like to see Tim in a big fight. Tim *wants* to put everything on the line."

4. Who will be the next young heavyweight to emerge as a world-class title threat?

So what if every third punch is aimed at his opponent's knee? One of the reasons Andrew Golota's performance against Riddick Bowe excited so many fans was because the heavyweight division was desperate for a fresh face. The big names (Tyson, Bowe, Lewis, Foreman, Moorer, and Holyfield) have been at the top for the entire decade. In fact, Golota is the first relative unknown to break through since Michael Bentt—and he turned out to be a one-hit wonder.

Jorge Luis Gonzalez was a fake. Larry Donald wimped out against Bowe. Herbie Hide reinforced the stereotype of the horizontal British heavyweight. Jeremy Williams' chin is made of crystal. Worse yet, Jo-el Scott, the division's most highly touted young fighter, has been severely slowed by serious legal problems. And if you were hoping for help from Atlanta, Lawrence Clay-Bey lost in the first round. At age 30, the corrections officer is likely to follow the oft-given advice: Don't quit the day job.

Andrew Golota is looking better all the time.

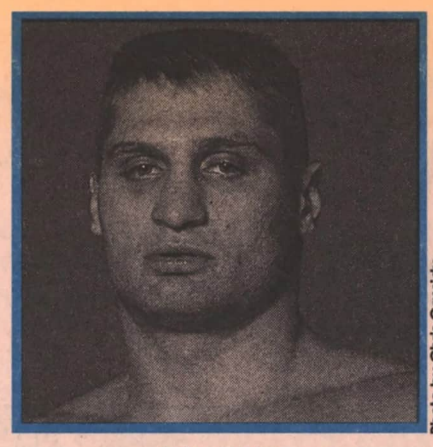


Photo by Chris Cassidy

Andrew Golota

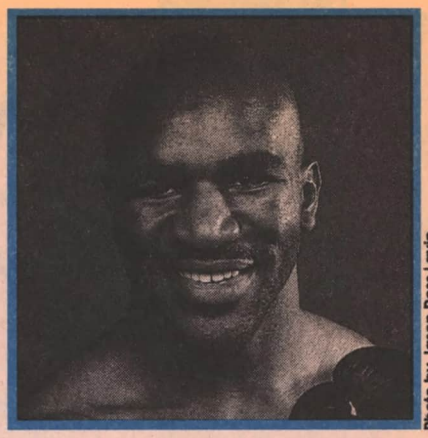
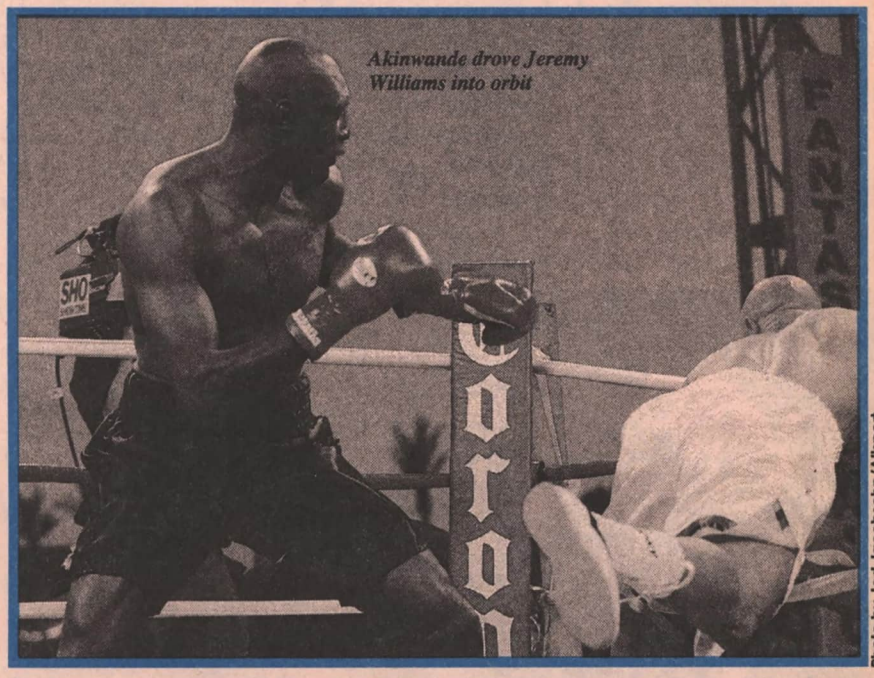


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Evander Holyfield



Akinwande drove Jeremy Williams into orbit

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

5. Is Riddick Bowe nothing more than a hot-and-cold fighter who has been overrated by the media?

Says Dennis Rappaport, who promotes Tim Witherspoon, "[Bowe's] been inept for a while, and everybody's been slow in picking it up. The man's deteriorated."

Dismiss the outspoken Rappaport's sentiment if you wish, but the fact is that more and more observers have soured on "Big Daddy." A fair question: How is Bowe supposed to compete with Mike Tyson if he can't handle the inexperienced Andrew Golota? "Riddick took Golota lightly," admitted Bowe's trainer, Eddie Futch. "Sometimes he [reverts] to the immature 16-year-old who needs a father."

Futch has long been frustrated by Bowe's inconsistency, as well as his failure to maintain a modicum of conditioning

(Continued on page 58)

By Stanley Weston
Publisher, THE RING Magazine

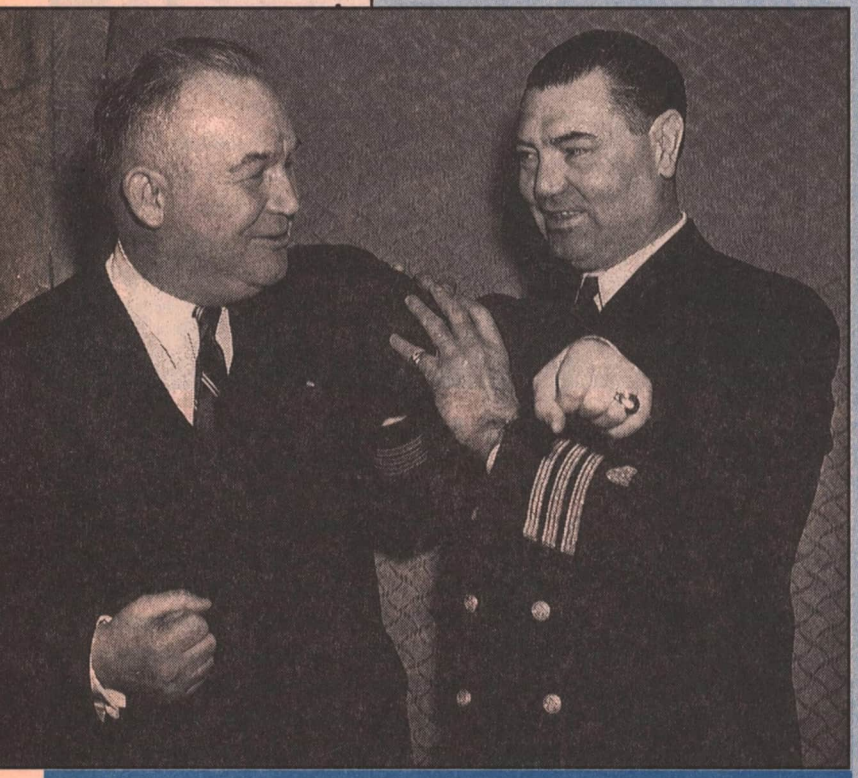
TIME CAPSULES

SHELBY PLUS 22

(August 1945)

In New York for a war bond drive, U.S. Navy Commander Jack Dempsey had just finished warming up the huge, wildly enthusiastic crowd filling Times Square. As he stepped off the flag-draped platform between 43rd and 44th Streets, he felt a hard slap on his shoulder. When Jack turned around, he was stunned to see a round, smiling face he recognized instantly as his old foe, Tommy Gibbons.

How could Jack ever forget that face? After all, on July 4, 1923, under a blazing Montana sun, Dempsey's nose and the nose on that smiling face had been pressed against each other for almost an hour as they waltzed around, seemingly intent on not inflicting physical harm on anybody, even as the world heavyweight championship hung in the balance. Sure, Dempsey was handed the decision after 15 yawn-generating rounds. The legendary killer instinct supposedly born into him had been nowhere in sight. It was a non-event the great Dempsey would always try to blot from his mind.



At a chance meeting during a war bond rally in New York City, former heavyweight champion and now U.S. Navy Commander Jack Dempsey faced off with old foe Tommy Gibbons, 22 years after their infamous title bout in a booming Montana mining town.

In the early-'20s, Shelby, Montana, was a little mining town. What set it apart from the hundreds of other similar places dotting the Old West was its wildly ambitious politicians and elders who craved national recognition. What faster way to get it, reasoned one of them, than to stage a world heavyweight championship fight right in the heart of town? Step number one was to contact, then negotiate with, the man who pulled the strings of the champion. The champion was Dempsey, and the string-puller was Jack "Doc" Kearns. What Shelby's braintrust did not yet know, but would quickly learn, was that to come out with even close to a fair deal with Doctor Slick would take the negotiating skills of a King Solomon, or at least a Benjamin Disraeli.

Without even shifting into second gear, Kearns led Shelby's wise guys to slaughter. Doc demanded, and got, as a guarantee, what amounted to the entire town, including the bank and everything in its vault. When Kearns and his champion finally hauled their butts out of town immediately after the fiasco, Shelby was all but bankrupt, and Dempsey still had his crown to go with his share of all that loot.

Is it any wonder that when Dempsey and Gibbons met by chance in New York City 22 years after their Montana waltz, Shelby was never mentioned?

NEW IDEA FROM AN OLD CHAMP

(September 1956)

Brittle hands plagued Jimmy Braddock throughout his see-saw career, a condition "Cinderella Jim" blamed squarely on inept trainers who hadn't a clue how to properly bandage a fighter's hands.

"The whole idea about bandaging," Braddock was quoted in a magazine article long after his combat days were over, "is to lock all the hand bones in place to cut down the risk of fractures, especially under impact. But of all the trainers I ever knew, maybe two percent, at the most, could do the job correctly."

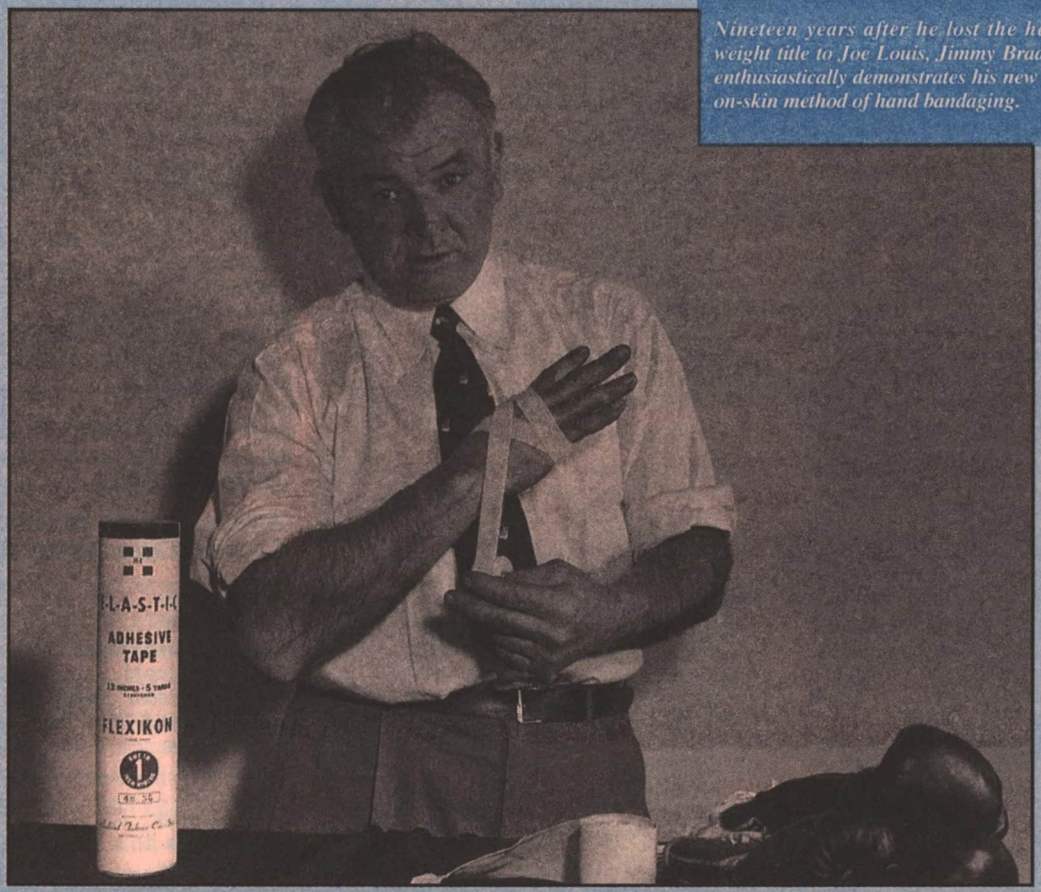
Jimmy accused inept trainers of ruining more promising boxing careers than did women-chasing. "Those poor guys would have been a lot better off had they fought without any bandages at all," he said.

Braddock never stopped trying to figure out ways to solve the problem. Almost 20 years after he lost the heavyweight title to Joe Louis, Jimmy hit on the idea of wrapping adhesive tape directly over the knuckles, upper hands, and wrists, very tight, to secure all the bones and cartilage, replacing the traditional method of first wrapping the hands with gauze, then using the tape over the gauze.

"Every fighter knows that the gauze never stays in place when it's directly against the skin," reasoned the former champion. "And the more the hands sweat, the more the gauze moves, increasing the injury. But the tape never moves away from direct skin contact, even if you stick your hand in a water bucket. It's like a weld."

Braddock tried very hard to convince his legions of boxing cronies to test his idea. A few leading trainers, including Whitey Bimstein and Freddie Fierro, experimented in gymnasium sparring sessions. But the technique never caught on, and to the best of our knowledge, was never used in a real bout. The final death blow came from the New York State Athletic Commission's Dr. Alexander Schiff, who stated, "It would take an orthopedic surgeon to do this taping properly. By locking in all the hand bones, like in a vice, there is no room for any give, or play, so to speak. No trainer I know of possesses the knowledge or skills to do it without unacceptable risks."

Braddock's reaction was both philosophical and realistic: "If I was still fighting, I wouldn't let a trainer touch my hands. I'd bandage them myself—with tape against skin." ■



Nineteen years after he lost the heavyweight title to Joe Louis, Jimmy Braddock enthusiastically demonstrates his new tape-on-skin method of hand bandaging.

BOXING FIGHT POSTERS, PROGRAMS, ART PRINTS, T-SHIRTS, PHOTOS & AUTOGRAPHS

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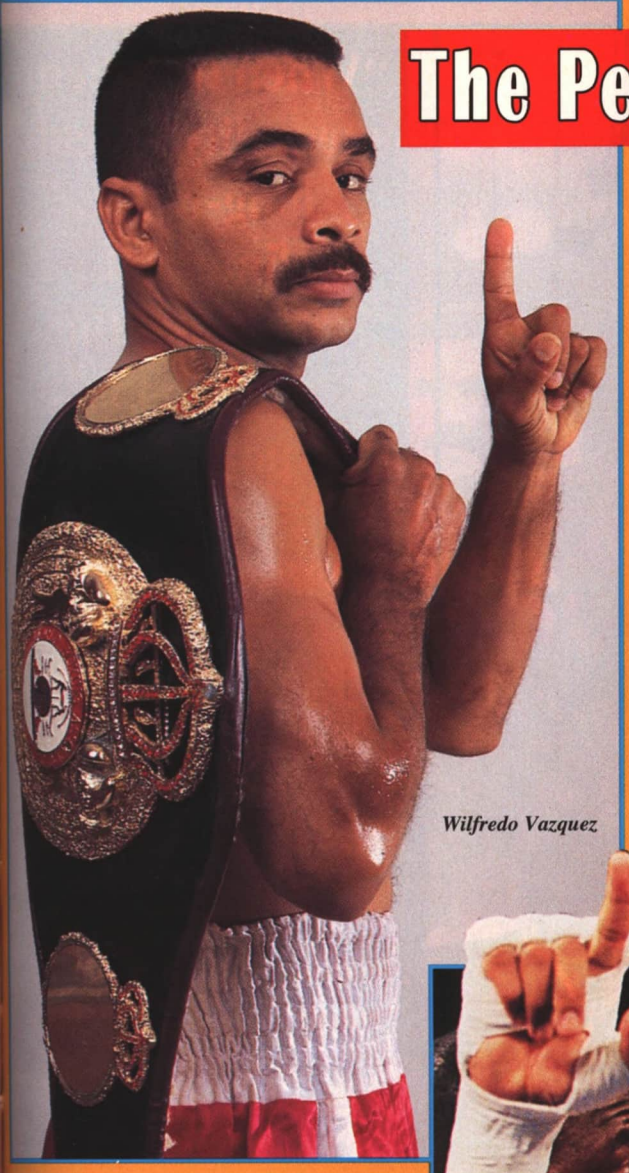
The Perils Of Puerto Rico

HOW TRINIDAD & VAZQUEZ CAN AVOID THE FATE OF THE GREATS



Wilfredo Vazquez

Felix Trinidad

By **Roberto Santiago**

Since 1938, Spanish Harlem's Eddie Mafuz has been on the boxing scene as a manager, trainer, promoter, and adviser to hundreds of young Puerto Rican fighters, many of whom have become world champions. Mafuz' love for the sport, and for its athletes, is deep, and he becomes upset when he thinks about how most of those world champions wound up broke, in jail, on drugs, or in poor health.

"One horror has remained constant in the past 58 years," Mafuz says. "Most of these talented boxers, because they are unable to manage their own wealth and celebrity, wind up destroying themselves."

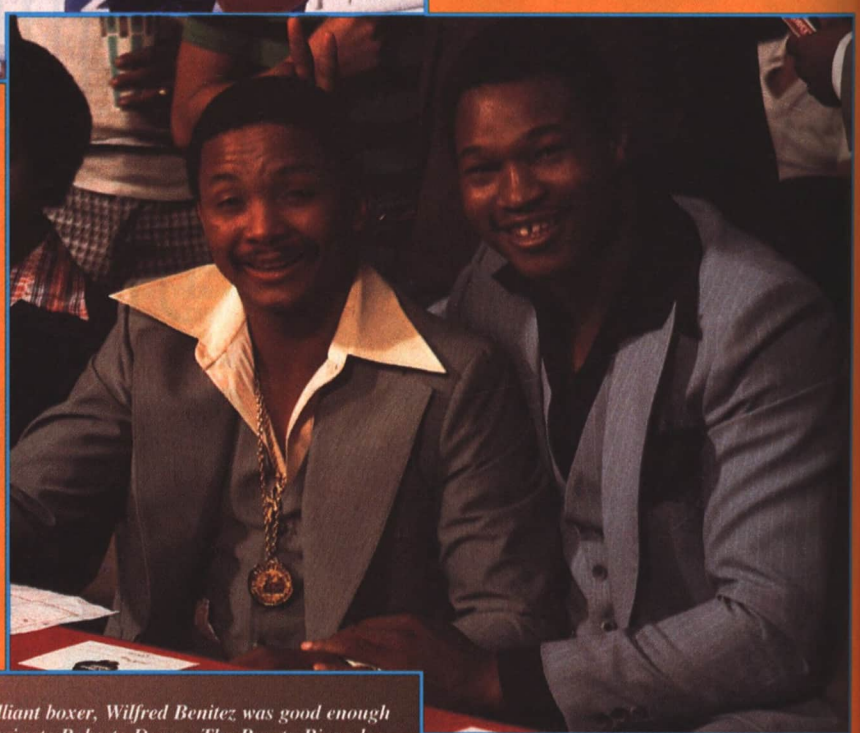
Although the often-told tale of former champions winding up with nothing but memories is hardly exclusive to one coun-

Wilfredo Gomez, ranked as the greatest Puerto Rican fighter of all-time, unloads on Juan Antonio Lopez during a 1982 defense of the WBC super bantamweight title. Gomez, who won titles in three divisions, has experienced a myriad problems since leaving the ring.

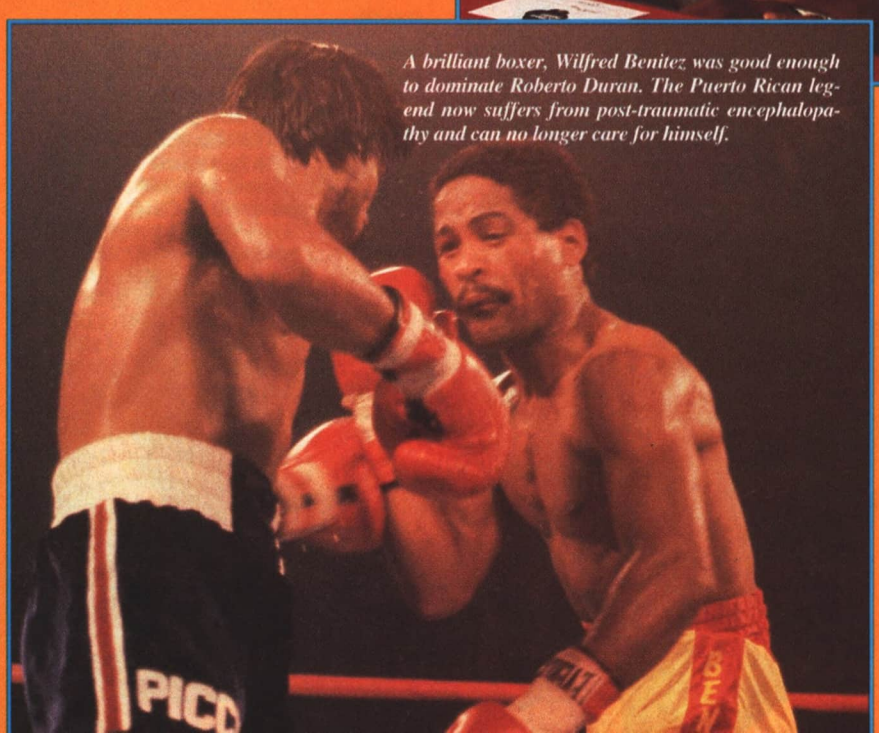
"When the ghetto mentality defeats long-range financial planning, the only net is poverty"
—Jose Torres

try and one people, the statistics become alarming when Puerto Rico is examined. The island, so small, has produced so many world champions who have retired with empty wallets or worse.

Puerto Rico has a population of only 3.7 million, yet has produced more world champions than some nations 10 times that size. (As of August, the island boasted two world champions, WBA featherweight king and triple-crown champion Wilfredo



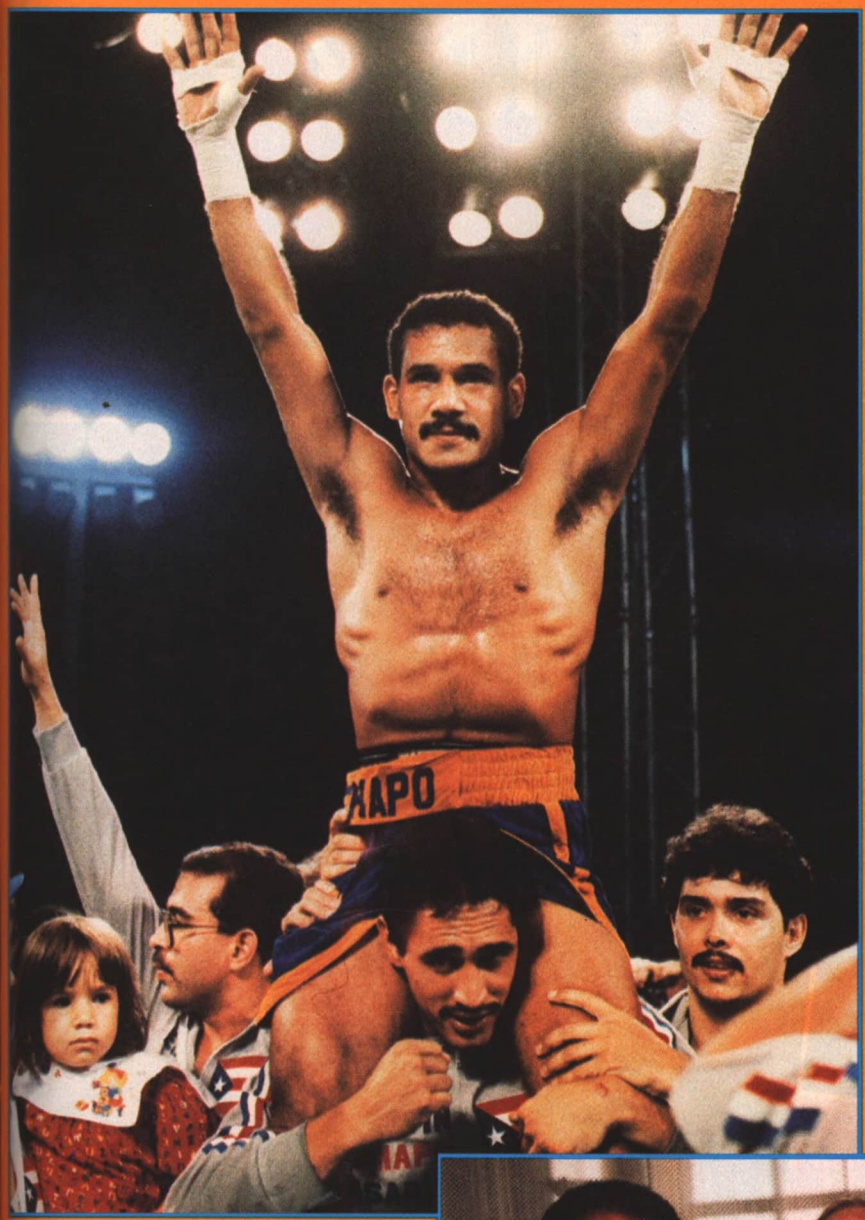
In a photo from 1977, Esteban DeJesus sits ringside with Larry Holmes. DeJesus, the first fighter to beat Roberto Duran, became a drug addict and died of AIDS in 1989.



A brilliant boxer, Wilfred Benitez was good enough to dominate Roberto Duran. The Puerto Rican legend now suffers from post-traumatic encephalopathy and can no longer care for himself.

Vazquez and IBF welterweight titlist Felix Trinidad.) But unlike the Sugar Ray Leonards and Larry Holmeses of the world, virtually none of Puerto Rico's champions have retired with any money to show for it.

"Many Puerto Rican boxers do not have the concept of long-term career planning, much less money management," says former light heavyweight champion Jose Torres, a Puerto Rican who fought out of New York City, where he still lives. "We



Two-division world champion Edwin Rosario enjoyed a lengthy reign at the top of the fight game. But like so many Puerto Rican champions, he found life after boxing difficult to negotiate. Since retiring, the former lightweight and junior welterweight titlist has struggled.

fall prey to the ghetto mentality, where money is something to be spent on flash and good times, not invested for the future. Buying fancy cars, houses, jewelry, gambling, and maintaining an entourage of expensive friends is not a wise thing to do when your career may not exceed 10 years."

What is going on with Puerto Ricans mirrors the condition of the Italian, Irish, and Jewish fighters of years past, notes former middleweight champion Jake LaMotta.

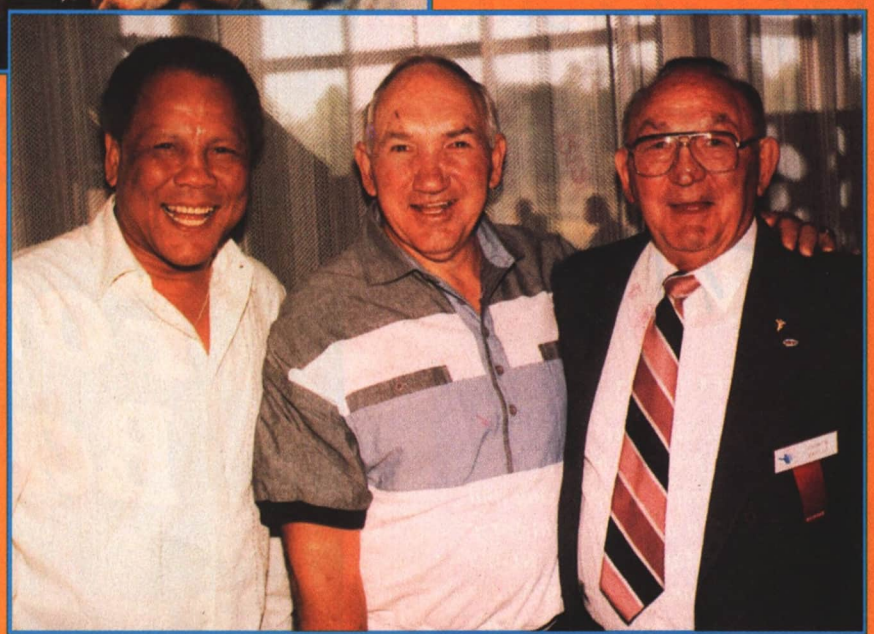
"I was unsophisticated about finances," says LaMotta, who is Italian. "I wasted my money, I went to jail—I lost everything. When they said a fool and his money are soon parted, they were thinking about uneducated street kids with attitudes and wads of cash in their pockets. We think the good times are going to be around forever."

But even LaMotta is taken aback by what is going on with former three-division world champion Wilfred Benitez, ranked by THE RING as the second-best Puerto Rican fighter of all-time, and the 30th greatest fighter of the last 50 years. The 38-year-old Benitez, who earned $6-million in his career, survives off a $1,125-per-month stipend granted to him by the Puerto Rican government.

In 1976, Benitez, a defensive genius, became the youngest world champion in history when he won the WBA junior welterweight title at age 17. Last June, he became the youngest boxer elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

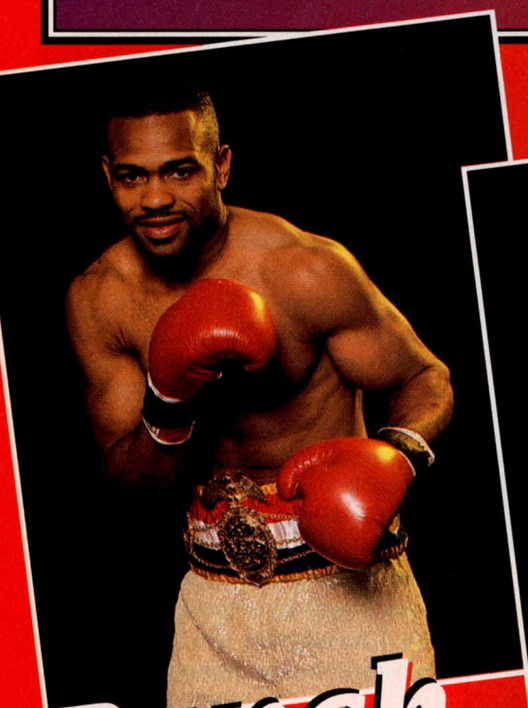
But Benitez cannot enjoy any of that. He is not only broke, but suffering from a degenerative brain disease called post-traumatic encephalopathy, which has rendered him unable to care for himself. The former fighter is cared for by his 69-year-old mother, Clara Rosa, who also tends to the needs of Benitez' older brother, Gregory, a former boxer who suffers from a similar form of brain damage. The family lives in a modest two-story house in Carolina,

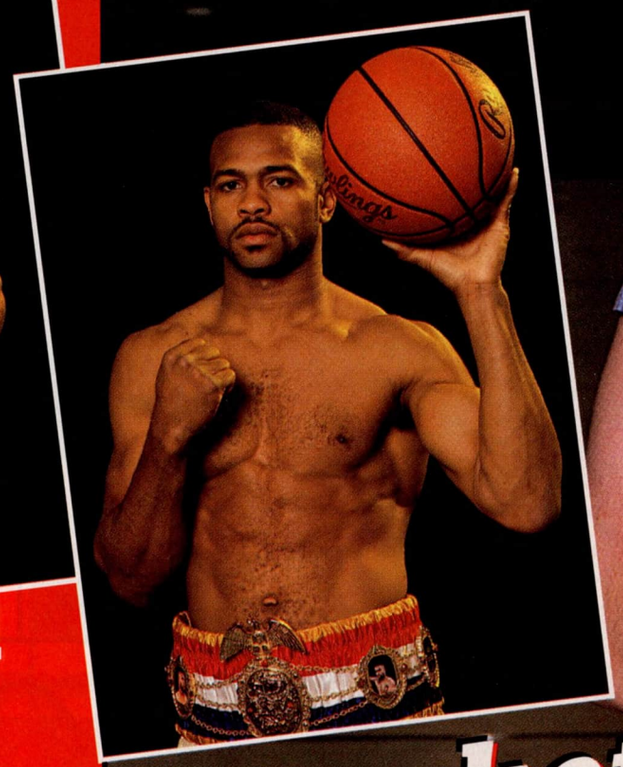
(Continued on page 59)



Former light heavyweight champion Jose Torres, shown with Gene Fullmer and Carmen Basilio, is an exception to the rule; since quitting the ring, he's been successful at a number of different endeavors.

THE RING VS. ROY JONES





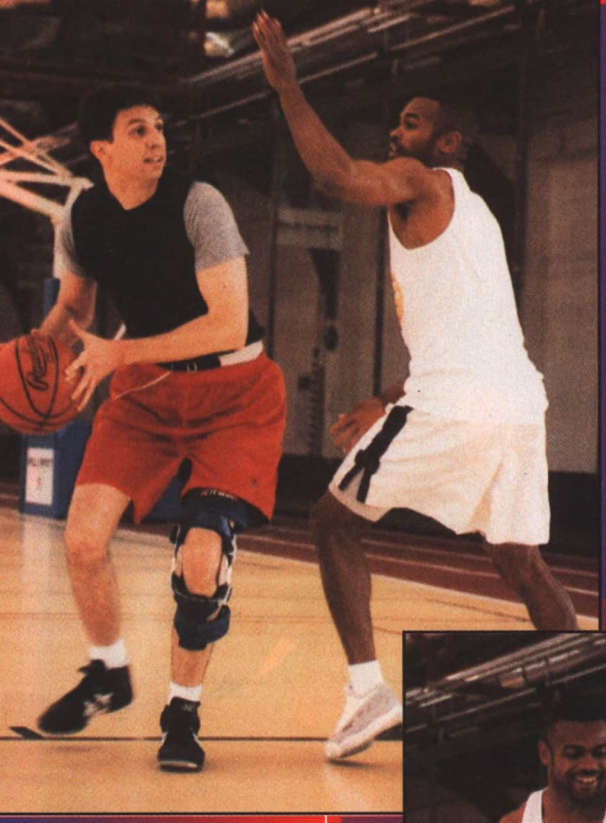
Punch For Punch & Basket For Basket

By Robert Cassidy

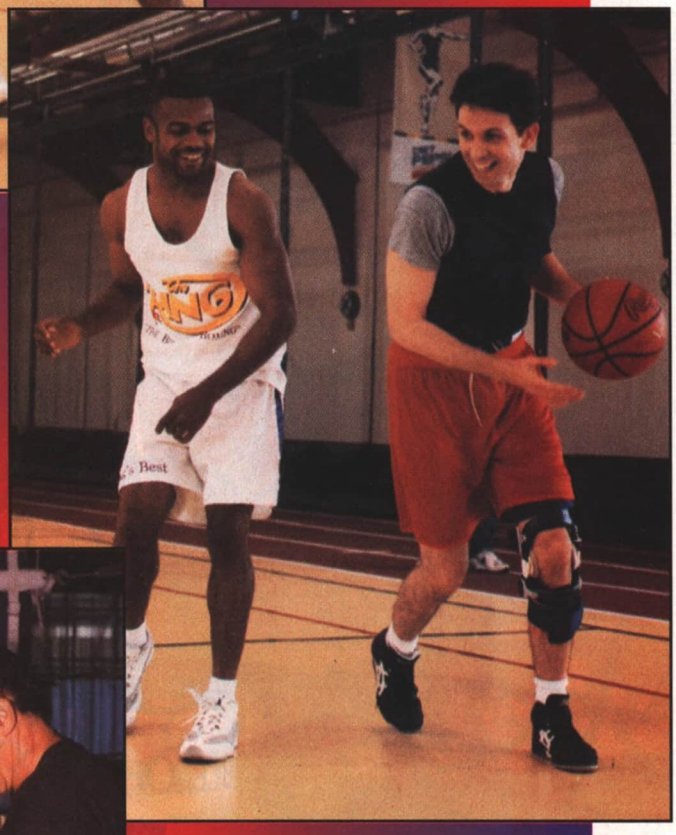
It's been six years since I've trained for a fight. That was when I first took up boxing and engaged in an amateur bout for a story in **KO Magazine**, *THE RING'S sister publication. The closest I have come to a boxing workout since is the Michael Olajide Aerobox tape I bought for my wife.*

Photos by Chris Cassidy

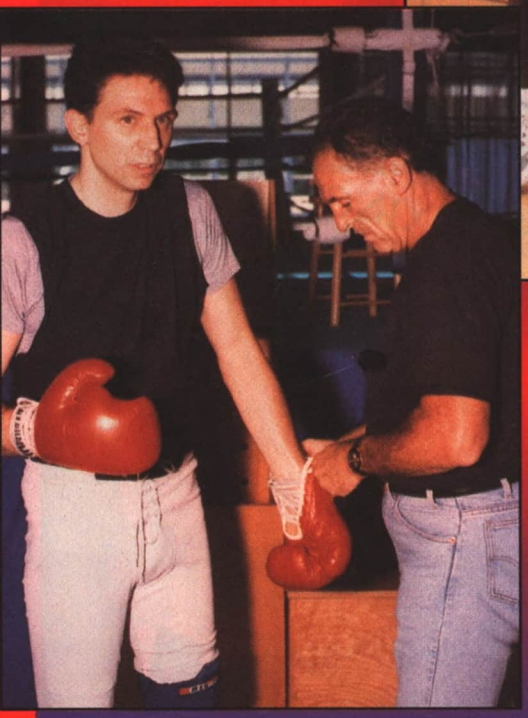
Roy Jones is a two-sport threat, but that didn't stop The Ring's Robert Cassidy from challenging him in both basketball and boxing. Just how good is Jones? Cassidy got an up-close-and-personal look.



Battling on the hardwood, Cassidy was able to score against Jones. His wife, a former professional player, helped formulate his game plan.



Jones, a point guard for the USBL's Jacksonville Barracudas, played with intensity when necessary, but fortunately for Cassidy, his mood was mostly light.



Just before the longest three minutes of his life, The Ring's guinea pig, uh, representative is gloved up by his father, former middleweight and light heavyweight contender Bobby Cassidy, who trains, among others, middleweight Lonnie Bradley.

When Editor-in-Chief Steve Farhood calls with an assignment, I'm usually prepared for anything. But I must admit, I was not ready for this.

Farhood asked if I wanted to take on IBF super middleweight champion Roy Jones in a game of basketball, and then box one round with him. (Say what you want about Steve as a writer, but he's clearly no Teddy Brenner.)

I told Farhood that while training for my previous bout, I had sparred with Ali Sanchez, a clubfighter who had been knocked out by Jorge Vaca. In turn, Vaca is a former welterweight champion who has been knocked out by Roy Jones.

"See, Bob," he said. "This fight was meant to be."

I had been a collegiate baseball player, but Farhood, the sadist that he is, omitted my best sport from the competition. Nonetheless, on eight days notice, I agreed to step into the ring—and onto the hardwood—with Roy Jones. My purse would be THE RING*'s standard free-lance fee. Let's just say it's a lot less than Merqui Sosa made for getting stopped by Jones at Madison Square Garden.*

I was confident I'd be prepared because my father, Bobby Cassidy Sr., is a former light heavyweight contender who trains Lonnie Bradley and Godfrey Nyakana. To sharpen my dulled boxing skills, we spent several sessions on the hand pads.

I have more experience in basketball. Although I haven't played competitively since high school, I still engage in pickup games whenever I can. My training partner for hoops was my wife, Leslie, who played professionally in Europe after a college career in which she earned academic All-America honors and was once ranked 10th nationally in rebounding.

Eight days notice? I would've preferred 80, but Farhood's deadline beckoned, so ...

I have followed the ascent of Roy Jones since he was robbed of a gold medal at the 1988 Olympics. I knew he was ticketed for stardom after he stopped Stephan Johnson and Ron Amundsen, both established and respected pros, in his second and third pro fights. He is equipped with that special blend of speed and power that is the rarest of commodities in boxing. But what makes him different is his style. To call him awkward is a disservice. He is unique. He punches from different angles, making his attack unpredictable and his defense nearly impenetrable. Like a savvy point guard, he creates his own opportunities. He can unravel an opponent with a flurry or render him unconscious with a single blow.

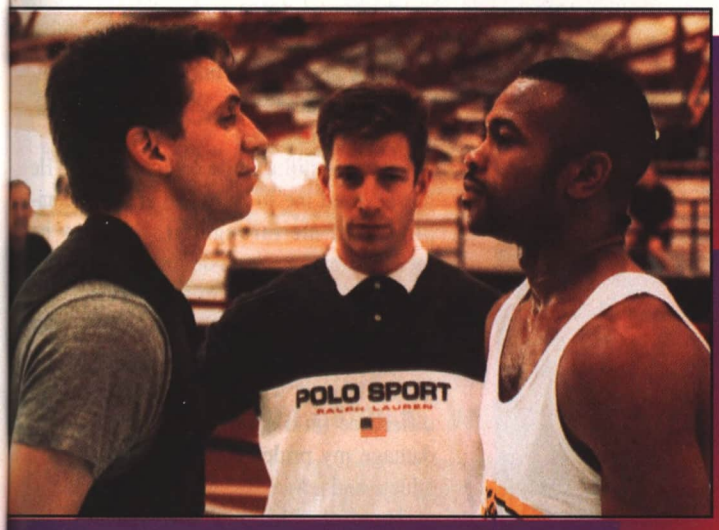
I have watched Jones on television, covered four of his fights live, and interviewed him on several occasions. Now I am ready to experience boxing's best fighter from a perspective that has been shared by only 32 other men: I will climb into the ring with him. My mission (and I've chosen to accept it): Box for three minutes without getting too close to the end of his punches.

"You are going to experience something that I find fascinating," Jones' co-manager, attorney Stan Levin, said to me. "A Roy Jones combination. It will be a great story to tell your grandchildren. By the way, do you have life insurance?"

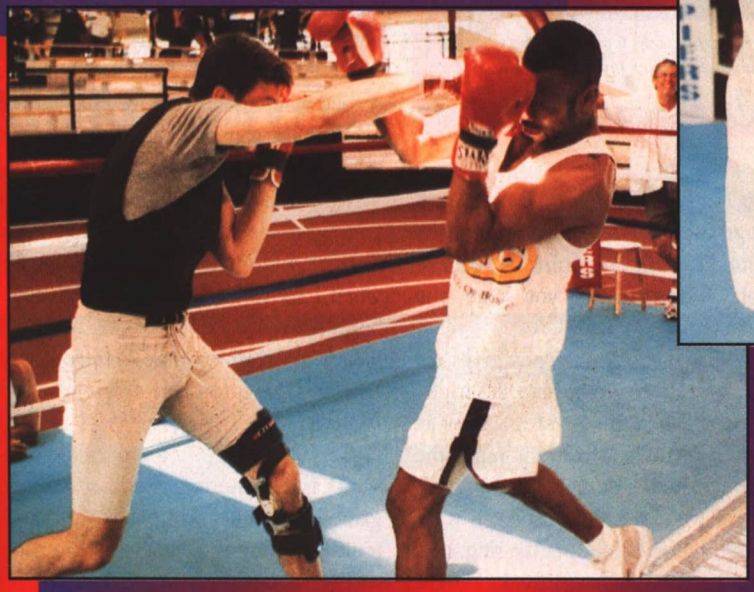
But on this day, there would be sky hooks before left hooks. The venue for our doubleheader is the Chelsea Piers Sports Center on Manhattan's West Side. The spacious and spanking-new exercise facility is equipped with a boxing ring and several basketball courts. A rare find in New York City.

Jones explains that he has spent the last few weeks playing in the Los Angeles Summer Pro League. One of his teammates was Kobe Bryant, the high school phenom who'll play for the Los Angeles Lakers next season. He also mentions how impressed he was with the quickness of point guard Mark Jackson, a nine-year NBA veteran who is 31 years old. I assured him that even though Jackson and I are the same age and play the same position, my surgically repaired left knee makes me considerably slower. (If pity is worth a point or two, I'll take it.)

Jones spent last season playing point guard for the Jacksonville Barracudas of the United States Basketball League, which has sent alumnae Anthony Mason and Lloyd Daniels to the NBA. He averaged four points and two assists while playing about 20 minutes per game in a league that has become a viable minor

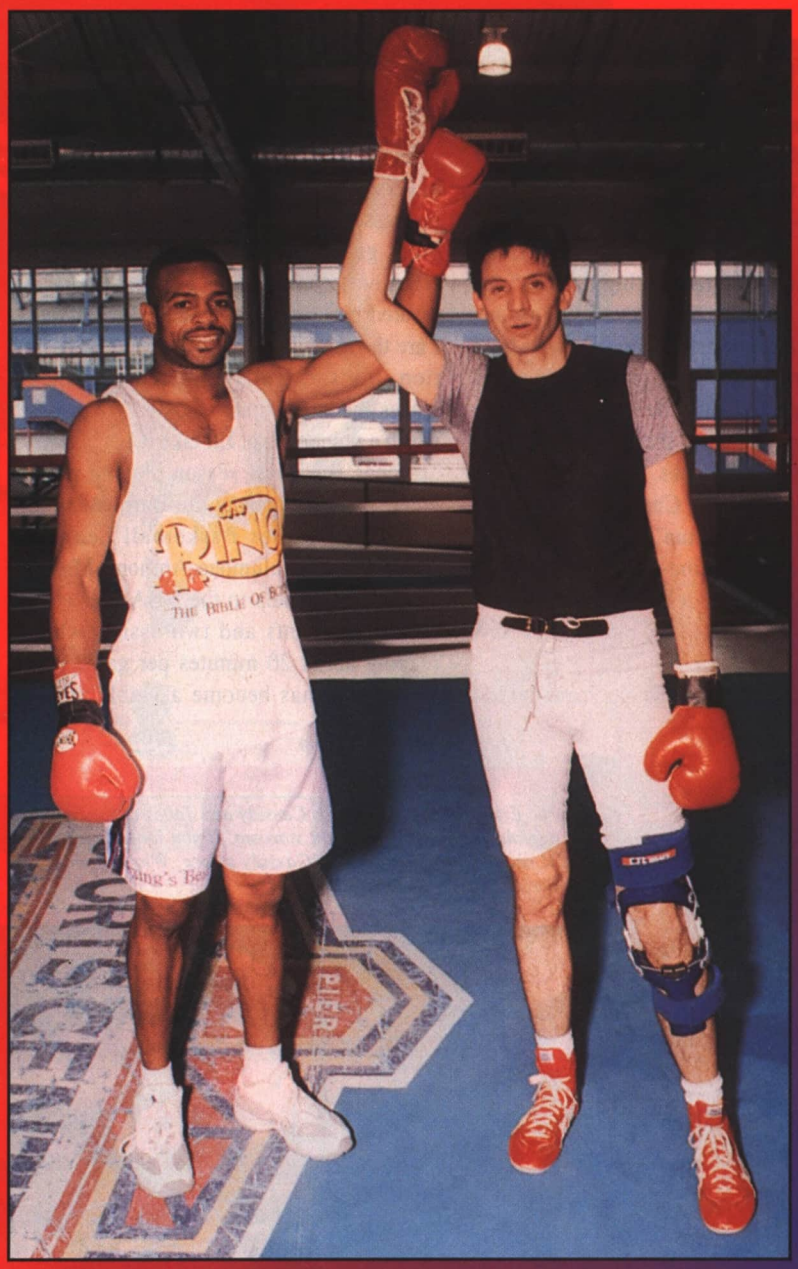


Referee Erik Stevens looks on as Cassidy and Jones engage in the age-old ritual of the prefight stareout. If you look closely, you'll see a hint of a smile on Cassidy's face. Why, he was wondering, wasn't Jones smiling, too?



Even when pitted against novices, some pro fighters have trouble pulling their punches. To Cassidy's delight, that wasn't the case with Jones, who clowned for much of their three-minute sparring session.

Cassidy did his best to make contact—any contact—with Jones. Sorry, Bob, we looked at dozens of photos, and this is the closest you came.



One fighter is fresh, relaxed, and loose. The other is utterly exhausted. Can you guess which is which? Writes Cassidy, "When it's over, Jones graciously raises my hand. It's a good thing because I don't think I could've done it on my own."

league alternative to the CBA. Jones made headlines on June 15, when he played the first half of a home game for the Barracudas in the afternoon and defended the title that evening against Canada's Eric Lucas. During an era in which the two-sport athlete has been a source of fascination, Jones set a precedent that presumably made Bo Jackson and Deion Sanders envious: He competed in two professional sports in one day. The closest I've ever come to matching that is covering two fight cards in one afternoon.

At 6'2", I have a three-inch height advantage over Jones. The game will be played to 11, with one point per basket. We'll play winner-out. (If you score, you keep possession.)

There's no jump ball; Jones gives me the first possession. I drop into the triple-threat position and jab-step. This is designed to draw movement from the defender, hopefully faking him out of position. But there is no reaction. Jones is waiting for me, and as he does in the ring, he's planning to counter my moves. I drive right, pull up about eight feet from the basket, and hit a jumper.

1-0. Me.

Jones is smiling. "Nice shot," he says.

When Jones gets possession, he quickly ties the contest, then builds a 5-2 lead. He is quick and has a good handle. He is able to drive left or right and is not shy about launching shots from beyond the three-point arc. While he improvises with flair and fury in the ring, his basketball game is rooted in solid fundamentals. My problem is his speed. If I play him tight to contest his jump shot, he can drive by me. So I play off a few feet and concede the jumper.

Jones allows me to dictate the pace. On defense, he does not suffocate me, allowing me enough room for a jumper, but closing quickly when I make my decision to shoot. I surprise him by driving left and converting a pair of left-handed layups. After several possessions, I find myself leading by a score of 7-6. I'm in a good shooting groove and bury three consecutive jump shots.

10-6. Point game.

There is still a smile on Jones' face. He has allowed me to have fun and has complimented me throughout. But now he focuses a bit harder on defense and my stamina begins to fade. I miss a jumper. I am breathing heavily, my lungs begging for oxygen. Jones is just starting to break a sweat. Here is where he demonstrates the difference (in a subtle way, careful not to damage my pride) between a world-class athlete and a weekend warrior.

He stutter-dribbles from the left side before driving right for a layup. He converts three more layups, and my lead has evaporated. At this point, I am spent, with my second wind reserved for the boxing ring.

With the game tied at 10, Jones demonstrates his physical strength by backing his way down the lane. When he works in the paint with his back to the basket, I find it difficult to hold my ground. Conversely, when I try to back him to the basket, he holds me in check by keeping his forearm lodged in my lower back. Planted firmly in the lane, he turns and drops in another layup.

11-10, Jones.

As is the case in all serious one-on-one games, you must win by two points. We trade several possessions without scoring

(Continued on page 61)

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The Ultimate King Of The Ring

By Pete Ehrmann

Like "The Long Count," why Duran quit against Leonard, and what Desiree Washington was doing in that hotel room at 2 o'clock in the morning, it's a subject ring enthusiasts can argue about until Peter McNeeley kayos a top-10 heavyweight.

The question: Who would win a fight between a boxer and a wrestler?

Dan Hodge takes less time to consider that one than he needed to pin many of his opponents when the Perry, Oklahoma, resident was America's top amateur wrestler 40 years ago.

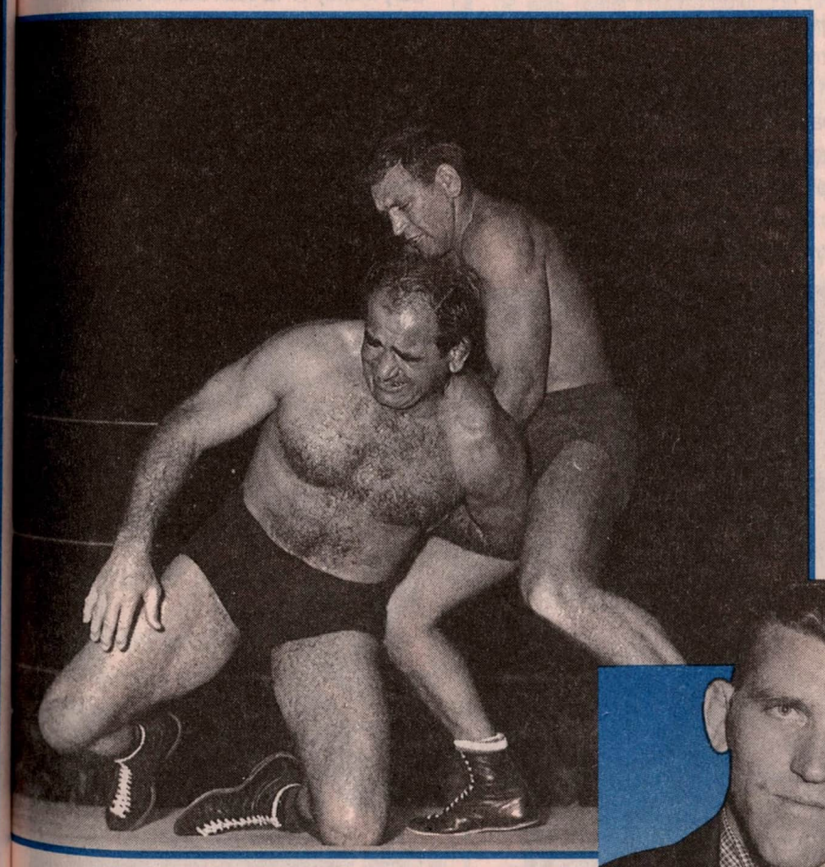
"What happens when a boxer punches? He's done. Wrestling begins right there. Wrestling will win every time," says the 64-year-old Hodge.

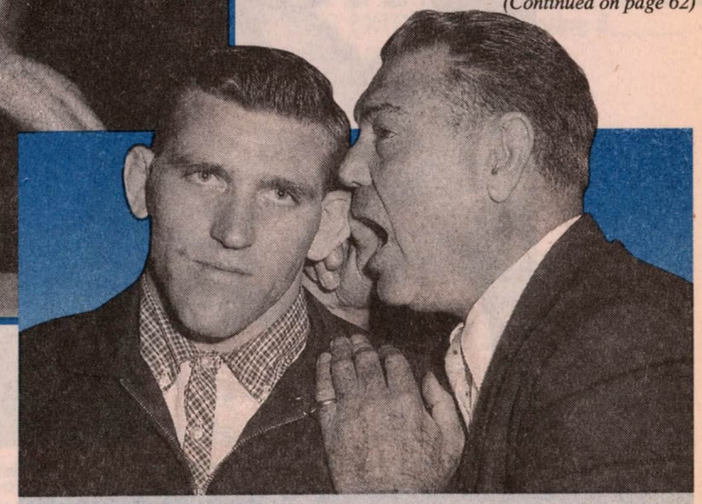
Now, before you boxing fans get your hackles up and dismiss that as typical rassler's foolishness, you should know that Hodge is one of the few people whose resume qualifies him as an expert on both sides of the question. He was not only a legendary amateur and professional wrestler, but also a national champion amateur heavyweight boxer who was being groomed to fight Floyd Patterson for the world title.

Besides which, he can squeeze your brains into apple sauce.

Hodge constitutes one-half the membership of a very exclusive club, and since the death of Paul Berlenbach in 1985, meetings have gotten even lonelier. Berlenbach, known as "The Astoria Assassin" when he won boxing's professional world 175-pound championship in 1925, had been an alternate on the U.S. Olympic wrestling team five years before that, and had won national Amateur Athletic Union wrestling titles at light heavyweight in 1922 and 1923. In the latter year, he won both the national 175-pound wrestling and boxing titles on the same weekend.

(Continued on page 62)





After learning the secrets of professional boxing from the great Jack Dempsey (right), Hodge embarked on a successful ring career. He later took his gloves off and tried his hand at professional wrestling, taking on the likes of the legendary Lou Thesz (above).

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
David Tua KO 1 Anthony Cooks
Darroll Wilson W 10 Rick Sullivan
Obed Sullivan W 12 James Gaines
Corrie Sanders KO 1 Curtis Shepard
Chris Byrd W 10 Uriah Grant
Joe Hipp KO 5 Anthony Moore
Jimmy Thunder KO 10 William Morris
Keith McKnight KO 1 Tui Toia
Michael Grant W 10 Ross Puritty
Courage Tshabalala KO 1 Victor Lopez
Robert Daniels KO 1 Stan Johnson
John Ruiz KO 1 Greg Pickrom
Vinny Curto KO 2 Lamont Ware

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Kenny Keene KO 9 Bobby Crabtree
Yosukezan Nishijima KO 3 Jerry McVee

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Joseph Kiwanuka KO 5 Rodney Toney
Darrin Morris W 8 James Gatlin

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Giovanni Pretorius KO 4 Yuri Epifantsev
Earl Monroe W 10 Jeff Johnson

WELTERWEIGHTS
Willie Wise W 10 Jose Antonio Rivera
Verdell Smith KO 8 Craig Kikta
Gary Murray W 12 Juan Carlos Villareal
Kevin Lueshing KO 2 Cirilo Nino
Purcell Miller KO 1 Kenny Baysmore

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Hector Quiroz KO 2 Marlon Thomas
Leonardo Mas KO 5 Raul Hernandez
Mickey Ward W 12 Lewis Veader
Andy Holligan KO 1 Paul Ryan

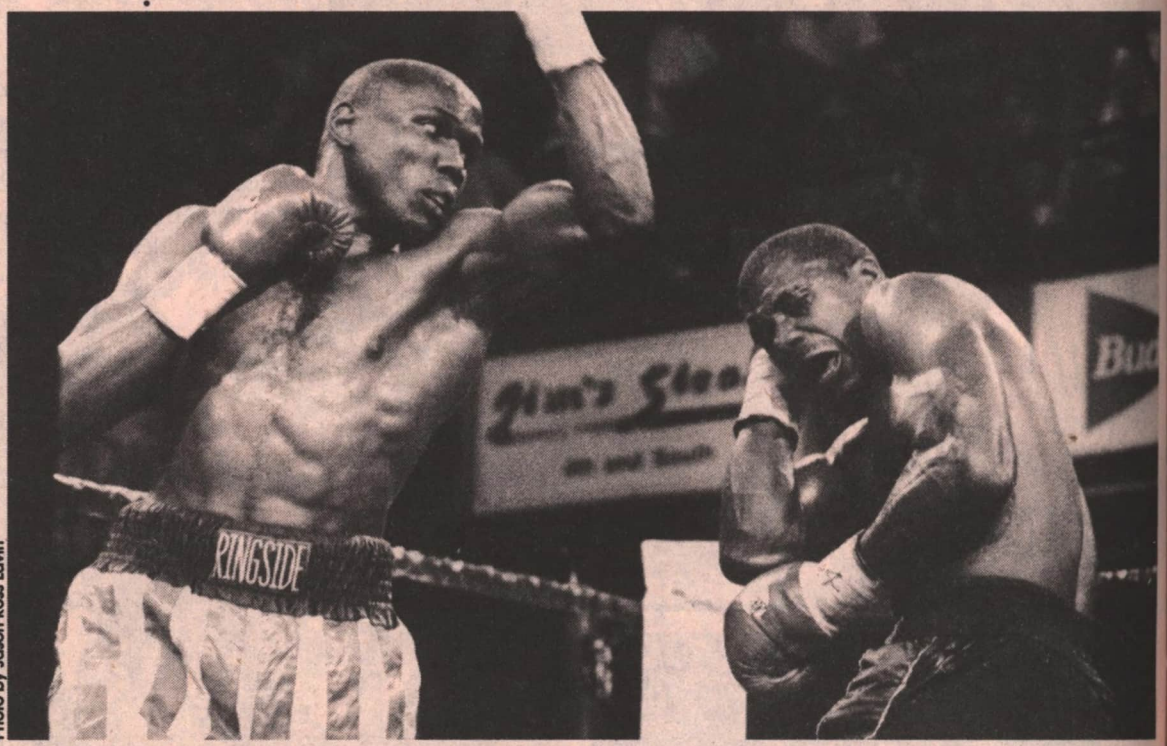


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Joseph Kiwanuka impressively beat up Rodney Toney

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Ivan Robinson W 10 Emanual Burton
Harold Warren KO 6 Santos Lopez
Michael Clark W 12 Mauro Lucero
Juan Rodriguez W 10 Tonito Rivera
Tony Pep W 8 Angel Aldaman
Tiger Martinez KO 9 Bruno Rabanales

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Angel Manfredy KO 5 Mtobeli Mhlope
Nestor Garza KO 2 Frank Gonzalez
Djamel Lifa KO 1 Joao Queijas

FEATHERWEIGHTS
David Santos W 10 Albert Rendon
Willie Jorrin W 10 Jose Roberto Lopez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Daniel Zaragoza KO 7 Tsuyoshi Harada
(Retains WBC Title)
Angel Chacon W 10 Mario Frias
Salim Medjkoune KO 8 Vincenzo Belcastro

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Juan Carlos Ramirez KO 6 Greg Richardson
Rudy Bradley W 10 Jesus Montiel

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Samson Dutchboy Gym KO 4 Ricky Sales

FLYWEIGHTS
Mark Johnson KO 8 Raul Juarez
(Retains IBF Title)
Fahlan Sakkiririn W 12 Orlando Malone

STRAWWEIGHTS
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin KO 3 Joseph Orgaleza
(Retains IBF Title)

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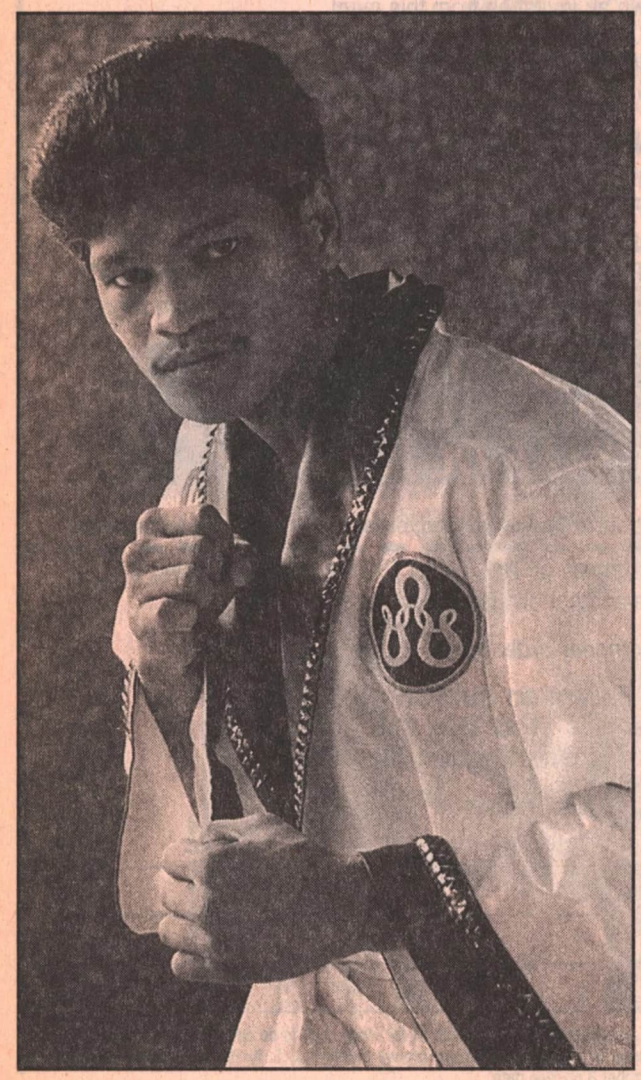
Seconds Out! ENTERPRISES PRESENTS

FIGHTER of the MONTH

As much as we would like to have reserved this space for Olympic gold medalist David Reid, amateurs need not apply. Nonetheless, there is a patriotic slant to our selection. Espinosa, who retained the WBC featherweight title by clearly outpointing mandatory challenger Cesar Soto, is a proud son of the Philippines. His defense, held at Rizal Park in Manila, was promoted by President Fidel Ramos, who let the public in free. (About 50,000 Filipinos took advantage of the opportunity.) You think the champion was feeling a wee bit of pressure?



After starting slowly, Espinosa boxed strongly, using his height and reach advantages to frustrate infighting specialist Soto. *(See fight report.)* The Filipino failed to flaunt his one-punch power, but this wasn't the time to engage in a shootout.

Espinosa isn't only a two-division titlist, but also a two-decade champion. It was in the late-'80s that he exploded onto the international scene, crushing defending WBA bantamweight champion Kaokor Galaxy in one round. After two successful defenses, he lost the crown and slowly faded until relocating in Japan.

But make no mistake: On July 6, Espinosa belonged to the Philippines.

• • • •

Luisito Espinosa

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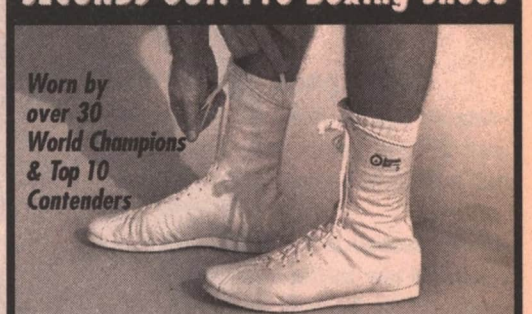

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

Mark Johnson KO 8 Raul Juarez

Inglewood, California: In his first defense of the IBF flyweight titie, Johnson lived up to his nickname of "Too Sharp." He also did something WBC titlist Yuri Arbachakov, widely considered the best flyweight in the world, couldn't: He knocked out Mexican champion "Baby" Juarez.

Defending before a crowd of 3,612 at the Great Western Forum, the 24-year-old Johnson, 111, Washington, D.C., displayed his entire arsenal and scored two knockdowns before stopping a game but outclassed Juarez, 111¾, Mexico City, Mexico, at 1:57 of the eighth round.

In February, Juarez had gone the distance in losing a title fight to Arbachakov.

From the outset, Juarez, 22, couldn't cope with the southpaw champion's speed and power. Unable to get inside, he was reduced to eating four- and five-punch combinations in an effort to land one shot of his own.

"Velocity was the difference," said Juarez. "I couldn't deal with his speed. Arbachakov might be a little better, but Johnson was way faster."

After dominating the first two rounds, Johnson, 30-1 (23), began showboating in the third. Mocking Juarez, hands by his sides, he would dart in, land a combination, and then dance out of danger. Clearly frustrated, Juarez, 20-3 (12), missed with a big left midway through the round, and Johnson leveled him with a right hook. Blood spewed out of the challenger's nose, but Juarez rose at the count of seven and came right at Johnson in an effort to smother his punches.

Featuring a swarming attack, Johnson went for a knockout in the fourth and fifth rounds. Juarez showed courage in absorbing the champion's best shots.

"I wanted to try and prove I was tougher than Yuri," Johnson said of his attack. "I had no business doing that. I knew [Juarez] was a very tough fighter. I watched him against Yuri and he took some good shots. I

Photo by Brent Cook

Johnson did something to Juarez that had never been done before

tried too hard looking for the early knockout."

Johnson switched to boxing mode in the sixth and seventh, which drew some scattered boos from the mostly Hispanic crowd. Early in the eighth, he snapped back Juarez' head with a straight left. He then pounced, connecting with a series of power shots that had Juarez backing up. A hook sent Juarez stumbling backward. After Johnson missed with a straight left, he came back with a right uppercut and a left that sent Juarez crashing. Referee Pat Russell (USA) didn't bother to count.

"Once I had him backing up," said Johnson, "I knew I could do anything I wanted with him."

The judges were Rafael Lopez (Mexico), Lou Moret (USA), and Gerald Maltz (USA).

Johnson's second defense will come against Mexico's Alejandro Montiel at the Forum on September 14.

Promoter: Forum Boxing

(8-5-96)

Carlos Arias

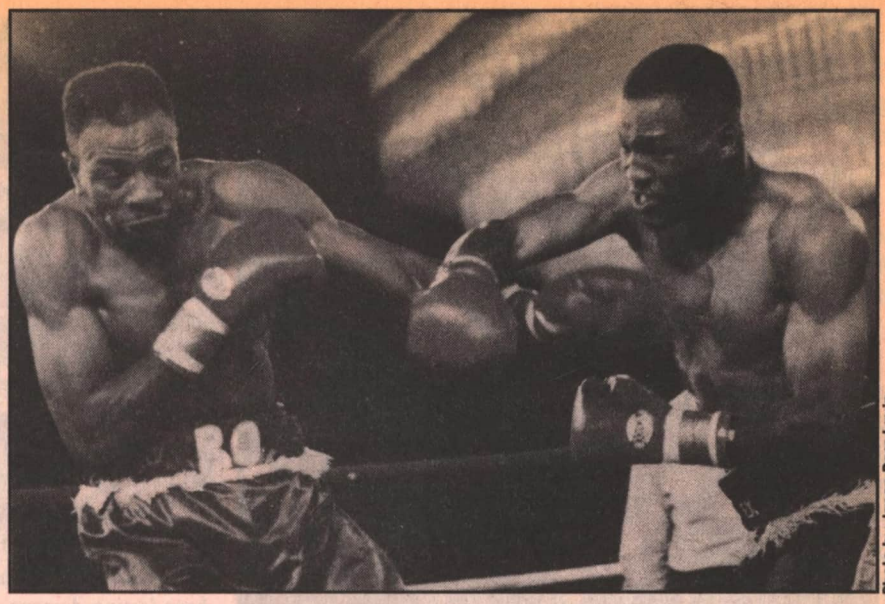


Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Hopkins took out James executioner style

Daniel Zaragoza KO 7 Tsuyoshi Harada

Osaka, Japan: The crafty Zaragoza proved too ringwise for fellow left-hander Harada and kept the WBC super bantamweight title with ease at Osaka Prefectural Gymnasium. It was Zaragoza's second defense.

The 38-year-old Zaragoza, 122, Mexico, won every round and issued lots of punishment. He almost finished Harada, 121¼, Japan, in the first round, stunning the 28-year-old challenger with hooks and crosses. In the second, Harada suffered a vertical cut over his right eyebrow. He proceeded to miss almost all of his punches, while Zaragoza circled and countered with precision.

Harada, 20-2 (11), was in trouble in the closing seconds of round five. When Zaragoza, 53-7-3 (27), sent the Japanese to the ropes in the seventh, referee Richard Steele (USA) didn't hesitate to call a halt at the 2:17 mark.

The judges were Lou Filippo, Chuck Giampa, and Rudy Ortega, all from the USA.

It is anticipated Zaragoza, one of the ring's most accomplished road warriors, will next risk the title against WBC bantamweight champion Wayne McCullough in Ireland.

Promoter: Jitsuo Harada (the challenger's father)

(7-20-96)

Joe Koizumi

Bernard Hopkins KO 11 Bo James

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Dominating from start to finish, Hopkins retained the IBF middleweight title for the third time, stopping the stubborn James at Merv Griffin's Resorts Casino-Hotel.

Let it be said that Bo knows guts. Hopkins, 158¼, Philadelphia, may not be the juggernaut Marvin Hagler once was, but he can be quite intimidating. Full-time firefighter James, 158, Newark, New Jersey, nonetheless hung in until the 2:02 mark of the 11th. A counterpuncher who depends on angles, the 35-year-old challenger rarely landed a punch, mostly because Hopkins never stopped throwing his own.

James' six previous defeats had all come via split decision. It seemed certain that odd streak would come to an end when the 30-year-old Hopkins, 30-2-1 (23), dropped him with a straight right in round two. It was the first knockdown of James' 28-bout career. Hopkins is not a very layered fighter; he just comes to do business behind a nasty left hook and crunching combinations. James, 20-7-1 (11), did well just to stay around for more than a half-hour.

Referee Rudy Battle (USA) picked an opportune moment to call a halt; as in softball, the mercy rule was instituted. James was battered to the ropes, and just as he was starting his descent to the canvas, the fight was stopped.

The judges were Al DeVito, Eugene Grant, and Jean Williams, all from the USA.

The bout was televised on the USA Network.

Promoter: Butch Lewis

(7-16-96)

Jack Obermayer

Mbulelo Botile KO 9 Marlon Bong Arlos

Alice, South Africa: Although he won easily enough, the undefeated Botile was not impressive in retaining the IBF bantamweight title for the fourth time before a crowd of 2,500 at Fort Hare University Hall.

After his impressive defense against Ancee Gedeon, the 23-year-old Botile, 117¾, East London, South Africa, was hailed as a future superstar. He never looked the part in this fight. The champion missed badly against the admittedly awkward Arlos, 117¾, Philippines. Still, he was never threatened in winning every round.

The wild-swinging challenger, who suffered a cut over his right eye in the first round, tried to take the fight to Botile, but he rarely connected. Conversely, the champion scored with effective shots to the head in the fourth and continued to apply pressure

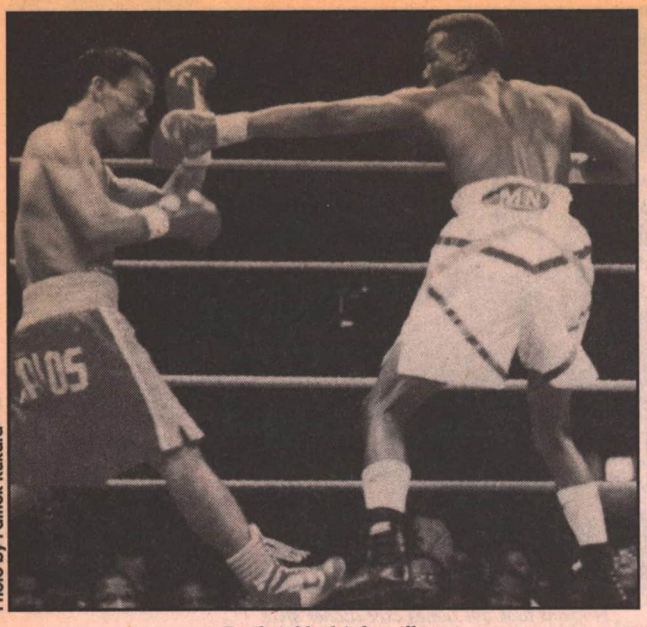


Photo by Patrick Kukard

Botile jabbed Arlos silly

through the eighth. When referee Bobby Ferrara (USA) called a halt at the bell ending round nine, it was somewhat of a surprise; Arlos' cut hadn't been a factor.

Botile is 20-0 (13); Arlos 21-5-1 (8).

The judges were Alfred Buqwana (South Africa), Lulama Mtya (South Africa), and Sheila Martin (USA).

Promoter: Rodney Berman's Golden Gloves Promotions

(6-29-96)

Ron Jackson

Steve Collins KO 4 Nigel Benn

Manchester, England: A super middleweight fight that promised to deliver, and seemed just about to, ended prematurely, bizarrely, and anticlimactically when Benn sustained an injury to his right ankle after falling awkwardly to the canvas.

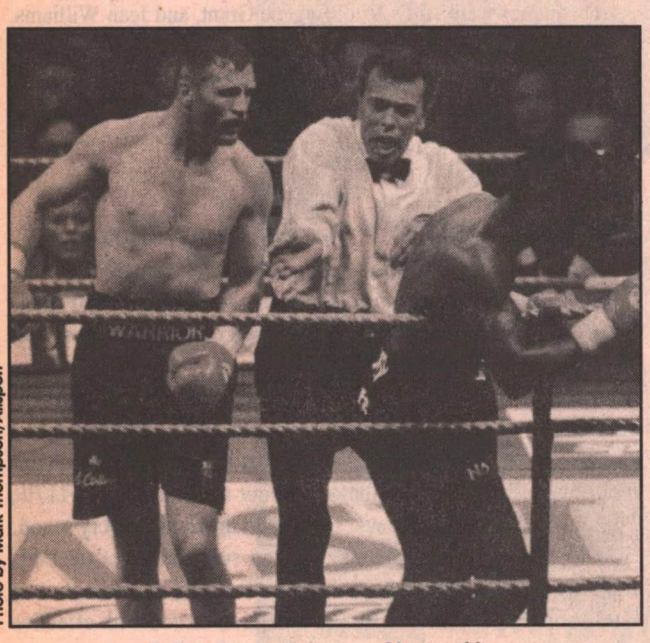


Photo by Mark Thompson/Allsport

Collins-Benn ended on an odd twist of fate

The 32-year-old Benn, 167½, London, England, tried to fight through it, but was defenseless as Collins, 165¾, Dublin, Ireland, fired a furious flurry on his beleaguered opponent, who lay helplessly on the ropes. Wisely, Benn signaled to the referee that he could not continue, and Dino Rodriguez (Puerto Rico) waved it over at the 2:46 mark of the fourth round. The bout was fought before 20,000 fans, and in an electric atmosphere, at the Nynex Arena.

Benn had landed the most significant punch of the fight, an almost-perfect left hook in the third round that caught Collins, 31, on the point of the jaw, but failed to move him. The Irishman fought back hard, putting together a combination of bludgeoning blows that backed Benn to the ropes. Benn escaped heavy punishment, though, and appeared ready to initiate a more sustained effort when the injury occurred.

Though there was plenty of bad intent over the opening two rounds, neither man gained a significant advantage. Punches, which if they had connected might have caused serious and perhaps lasting damage, flew wildly past the respective target areas. Collins, 33-3 (17), landed a strong left uppercut in the first, but Benn, 42-4-1 (35), retaliated with a strong left of his own. Both men were guilty of lunging, as opposed to picking their punches, but the possibility always remained of a bull's-eye.

Benn got in with another hook in the second, but it was nothing like the one in the third, which landed solidly. Benn continued his assault in the fourth. Collins came back and pinned "The Dark Destroyer" on the ropes. Loading up on his shots, the Irishman found himself unable to connect, as Benn bobbed and weaved and effortlessly slipped the blows. But a blow of his own led to Benn's downfall. A wild right missed and he fell to the floor, turning alarmingly on his right ankle. When he rose slowly, he grimaced and was in obvious distress. The referee asked him if he was okay, and Benn replied, "Yes," but seconds later he had no option but to turn his back on his foe.

The judges were Gordon Volkman (Norway), Michael Pernick (USA), and William Lerch (USA).

Afterward, Benn announced his retirement, but reconsidered by the time he reached the awaiting press. A rematch is expected to take place before the end of the year.

Promoter: Frank Warren

(7-6-96)

Brian Doogan

Vincenzo Nardiello W 12 Sugarboy Malinga

Manchester, England: After 12 rounds of monotonous action, a subdued Malinga surrendered the WBC super middleweight title to the awkward but talented Nardiello by split decision in the chief supporting bout to Collins-Benn at the Nynex Arena. It was Malinga's first defense.

In winning the title against Benn, the 36-year-old Malinga, 165¾, Johannesburg, South Africa, had been a marvel, nervelessly employing perfect tactics—jabbing and showing plenty of lateral movement—to nullify his opponent's brute force and aggression. Against the left-handed Nardiello, 167, Rome, Italy, he was awful, falling short with the majority of his punches and failing to raise the pace until the final third of the fight. He never put together a good combination, and his left hand might as well have not been

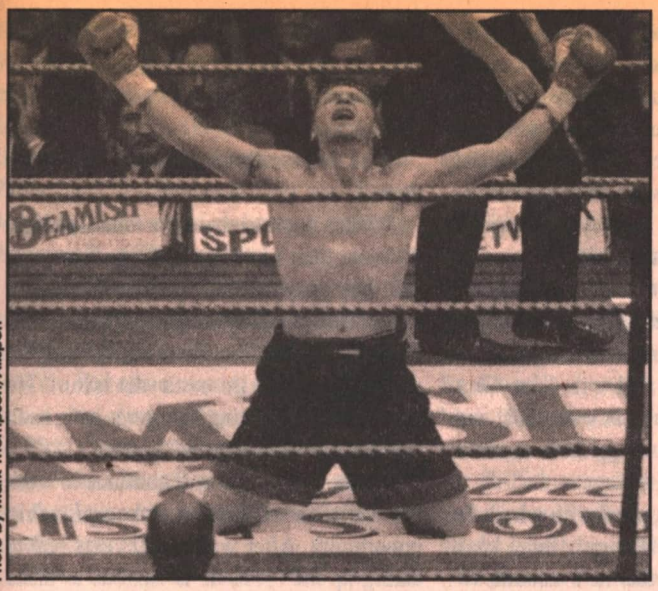


Photo by Mark Thompson/Allsport

Nardiello: Tears of joy

there. Moreover, he looked like he had never seen, never mind fought, a southpaw in his life.

The 30-year-old Nardiello, 29-5 (17), was sharp from the start, catching Malinga, 41-9 (17), with quick counters that stole points—even if they didn't set the pulse racing. If his tactics were to spoil, then he succeeded overwhelmingly. His efforts to frustrate Malinga worked comprehensively, and he thoroughly merited the decision.

There was little action in the opening round, a sad characteristic of many of those that followed as well. Nardiello's accurate jabs proved the difference, and he took the second as well, landing some well-placed rights and straight lefts. His punches were never damaging, though, and if Malinga had showed a little more urgency, he would have come through them with ease.

Nardiello took the third, but by the round's end was beginning to show signs of marking underneath his right eye. (Excellent corner work prevented the bruising from becoming an issue.) Malinga's timing improved in the fourth, but his work rate still left much to be desired for a defending world champion. He took the fifth and sixth, but Nardiello landed a solid right in the seventh that shook Malinga and allowed the challenger to regain the initiative.

A low blow by Malinga in the ninth, a round he was winning, was punished by referee Mickey Vann (England), who deducted a point. Malinga now recognized the gravity of the situation, but it was too late. He took two of the last three rounds, but it wasn't enough.

John Keene (England) scored 116-112 and Roger Kreitz (Luxembourg) 114-112, both for Nardiello. Miguel Acuna (Mexico) saw it 116-111 for Malinga. THE RING had Nardiello in front by 115-113.

Such was the flatness of the fight that the crowd kept itself entertained by performing repeated sequences of the Mexican wave.

Promoter: Frank Warren

(7-6-96)

Brian Doogan

Luisito Espinosa W 12 Cesar Soto

Manila, Philippines: Local hero Espinosa retained the WBC featherweight title for the second time, unanimously outpointing mandatory challenger "Cobrita" Soto before an estimated crowd of 50,000 at Rizal Park. The bout was promoted by Philippine President Fidel Ramos, who let the public in for free.

The last time the 29-year-old Espinosa, 125, Philippines, defended a world title at home, he lost the WBA bantamweight crown to Israel Contreras in 1991. This time, he made sure not to get caught, boxing cautiously against the infighting Soto, 125¼, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

Espinosa appeared tight at the start, and in the second his knees were buckled by a left hook. In the third, however, he established the pattern of the fight; Soto, 24, moved forward and punched first, and the champion countered with precision. Such tactics enabled the champion to win a string of rounds. In the eighth, referee Arthur Mercante (USA) penalized Soto a point for punching low. Neither fighter ever came close to scoring a knockdown, and while Soto, 43-7-2 (34), accelerated in the 11th and 12th, he never came close to catching the fleet-footed Espinosa, 39-7 (20).

Tony Perez and Marty Denkin both scored 115-112, and Tom Kaczmarek 117-112. All three judges are from the USA.

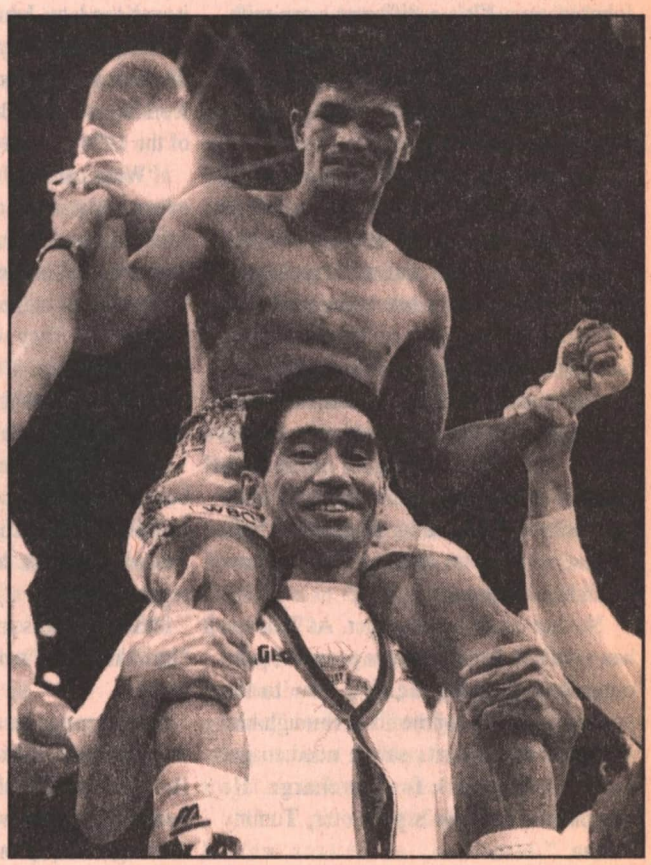
Said Perez, "It was Espinosa's hard counterpunching that won him the fight."

Next up for Espinosa will likely be Yuji Watanabe in Japan, sometime in October or November.

Promoter: Clarito Samson of Network Wira Asia

(7-6-96)

Ted Lerner ■



Espinosa with manager Joe Koizumi

New Faces

(Continued from page 16)

when Johnson began a string of fights that saw him knock out 11 consecutive opponents. Prior to that streak, he seemed to have settled into a groove as a smooth, if unspectacular, counterpuncher. He had been able to outbox and frustrate opponents, and had shown some pop in his left hook, but only minimal finishing power.

After starting out with three quick knockouts in 1993, Johnson ran into a more difficult brand of foe in his fourth fight.

"Tony Brooks was the first southpaw I fought as a pro," Johnson recalls. "He presented some problems. He caught me with a good, hard, straight left and shook me up. He taught me a lesson."

It was the first of many he was to learn in his next nine bouts, and over a period spanning nearly 18 months. One of Johnson's only two stoppage victories during that time came against JoJo Harris in '94, but he matured into a 10-round fighter along the way.

"That was my learning process," Johnson says. "It's a different story without the headgear. I learned to fight the pro style. I learned to sit down on my punches. That's when I started knocking people out."

Ask Bill Bradley, who was a veteran trialhorse when he took Johnson the full 10 rounds in December '94. Bradley returned just over a year later and was expected to do the same in a scheduled six-rounder on a *Tuesday Night Fights* undercard. But he failed to survive Johnson's opening salvo.

"He was a tough fight," Johnson says. "I had beaten him convincingly for 10 rounds, but I couldn't figure out how to knock him out. The second fight, he came right at me. He talked to me after the fight and he told me he couldn't believe how much I had improved."

Neither could his manager. As Johnson has evolved from the raw prospect who outpointed Bradley the first time to the powerful puncher who walked through him in the return, Gerrits saw a need to get more quality work for his charge. He approached Johnson's promoter, Tommy Torino.

"Tommy kept telling me, 'This guy will go the distance with him; he goes the distance with everybody,'" Gerrits says. "Then Glen would knock the guy out."

Says Torino, "Glen is a guy who just keeps improving. Every fight I try to put him in a little tougher, and he keeps knocking them out. I don't know yet how good he is. He just keeps getting better."

While he has yet to face a contender, Johnson has gone through several tough opponent types in impressive fashion. However, durable fighters like Guy Stanford, Dan Mitchell, Jerome Hill, and Melvin Wynn are no longer able to offer any sort of real test.

Johnson isn't concerned with who he's fighting at this stage. "The only thing I ask them to tell me is whether he's a southpaw or right-handed so I know how to train," Johnson says. "I don't even ask what his name is."

His main concern is keeping busy until his time in the spotlight arrives. He never did get to shine in the Olympic spotlight, which bothers him some to this day. He was not a U.S. citizen when the selection process began for the 1992 Games in Barcelona. By the time the thought of fighting for Jamaica occurred to his coach, it was too late. Johnson wasn't completely shut out of the Olympics, though. Part of the deal when he signed with Gerrits was working with Pat Burns, an assistant coach of the 1996 U.S. Olympic boxing team.

"What can you say about the guy that everybody doesn't already know?" Johnson says of his trainer. "He likes you to work hard in the gym. He can be hard. To be a good trainer, you have to be. A lot of guys cry. They want to do this and they want to do that. I try to do whatever the trainer says, and then I do extra. I put as much energy into it as possible."

Johnson is dedicated to making sure his boxing dreams become reality in the way his musical aspirations did not. Like most Jamaican youths, he wanted to become a reggae star.

"Singing was my first love," he says, "but that didn't happen. I didn't get a break."

In the ring, he says he will make his own breaks. "I picture myself walking through the middleweight division and becoming middleweight and super middleweight champion," he says. "My confidence level is so high right now, I don't think I can be beaten. My management says the guys they are giving me right now are what I need. I want to get in with the champions."

And Johnson's ambition doesn't stop there.

"When I get to the super middleweight division, then I have a challenge," he says. "He has great talent, but Roy Jones is a wimp. He should be undisputed super middleweight champion. There should only be one champion in each division. He shouldn't be fighting the guys he's been fighting. He should unify the title."

For now, Johnson will continue to work his way toward his own championship opportunity. After waiting 20 years before taking up the sport, he is anxious to make up for lost time.

"I want to bring excitement to the middleweight division," he says. "All the great fighters came through there—Sugar Ray and Thomas Hearns and Roberto Duran. I don't see anybody out there who can stop me." ■

Tommy Deas Jr. is a sportswriter for The Tuscaloosa (Alabama) News and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

Luis Rodriguez

(Continued from page 23)

trey ... ' so fast, and I'm thinking, *slow down 'cause Luis ain't going nowhere!"*

How would Rodriguez have fared against today's best welters? Dundee doesn't hesitate in pronouncing, "He'd clean up the division. Slap them all over the joint."

Boxing historian Hank Kaplan calls Rodriguez one of boxing's great all-time fighters, welterweight or otherwise. "He was one of the greatest pure boxers of my time," Kaplan states. "Since Sugar Ray Robinson, there's been nobody better as a boxer. Rodriguez was an incredibly accurate puncher. He was not a muscular-looking guy, more lanky and wiry, with long arms. He'd throw that long right hand and land it on the button every time. He had the ability to operate in what I call the danger zone without fear. He was so cool-headed."

Kaplan echoes many of Dundee's observations. "Marvin Hagler was a great fighter," he said, "but he never stepped out

of his weight class. Rodriguez beat all the best welters, and then took on all the top middleweights. Hurricane Carter couldn't lay a glove on him. He outboxed a boxer in George Benton. Luis fought all the tough Philly fighters—Bennie Briscoe and Percy Manning and a couple of others. He was the assassin of Philadelphia.

"Rodriguez had the unique ability to make it all look so easy. He never struggled in a fight except against Emile Griffith. For some reason, maybe a macho thing, he always fought Griffith on Griffith's terms. And the only fight that wasn't close in this great rivalry was the one that Luis won, when he took Griffith's welterweight title."

When Rodriguez' name comes up, it's usually in connection with Griffith. The rivalry spanned four bouts, including three championship fights, and Rodriguez came up on the short end in all but one of them. Here again, the cold numbers are misleading.

The two welterweight legends first met in a 10-round bout in 1960, with Griffith earning a hard-fought split decision. Three years later, Rodriguez challenged Griffith for the latter's crown. Rodriguez clearly outboxed Griffith in the middle rounds, but the champion's pressure tactics allowed him to rally late. Griffith paraded about the ring after the final bell as if he were certain he'd kept the title. However, Rodriguez won going away, 9-5, 8-5, and 8-6 on points.

The rematch took place 45 days later, this time on Griffith's home turf, at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Griffith regained the title via highly controversial split decision (scores of 8-7, 9-6, and 5-10 in rounds). Twenty-four writers in the press section were polled, and 17 had scored for Rodriguez. "Luis beat him, but that's the way the world goes," said Dundee. "Luis understood that better than anybody." Rodriguez himself said, without a trace of bitterness, "To beat Griffith in New York, you need a flamethrower."

The fourth and final meeting was staged almost a year later in Las Vegas. Prior to the fight, Rodriguez had a bizarre dream about meeting the biblical King David, who told him that they were matadors and would " ... kill the black bull." When the dream made the papers, Griffith was enraged over what he felt was a lack of sensitivity on Rodriguez' part. (Only two years earlier, Benny "Kid" Paret had died after a welterweight title bout with Griffith.)

The last fight between Rodriguez and Griffith was a brawl, marred by repeated fouling on the parts of both men. Rodriguez was penalized a point early for low blows, and both fighters were warned for butting, as well as holding-and-hitting. Exchanges after the bell occurred in at least three rounds. As in their previous meetings, Rodriguez outpunched Griffith, but Griffith scored with the heavier blows and showed more aggressiveness. When the final bell rang, the officials called it a split decision (scores of 69-67, 70-68, and 70-71 on points), once again in favor of Griffith. Shortly thereafter, Rodriguez moved up to middleweight. Unfortunately for him, so did Griffith.

Enrique Encinosa, a lifelong friend of Rodriguez and a former boxing scribe in Cuba who now writes on Cuban affairs for various Miami publications, reflected on Rodriguez shortly after the fighter's death.

"There are many things about Luis Rodriguez that few people know," he said. "Luis sang opera and was an excellent dancer. He'd been performing song-and-dance routines on Cuban television and had won dozens of amateur contests before the Castro regime took over.

"Luis actually considered a career in entertainment instead of boxing, and would have been great in that field, too. He was such a people person. Everyone loved him. He was a most easy-going type, very happy-go-lucky.

"In the ring, as a pro, Luis had fantastic boxing ability. You know, he fought Wilbert 'Skeeter' McClure twice and beat him easily. People forget that it was McClure, not Cassius Clay, who was named the best boxer at the 1960 Olympics. McClure had won 14 straight as a pro when he fought and lost to Rodriguez. After he lost to Luis a second time, McClure said, 'I'll never fight him again; this cat is just too fast.'

"Something else: Luis scored more knockouts in the Cuban Golden Gloves competitions than any other fighter."

Which brings up the following question: Did Rodriguez lack a big punch? Said Kaplan, "He wasn't missing much as a fighter, but he didn't have the greatest punch. Not one-punch power like a Hurricane Carter. And Luis was so good and so confident that sometimes he'd get a little careless. Plus, he was so good-natured, such a good-hearted person, maybe he lacked some killer instinct."

Dundee drew an analogy: "Muhammad [Ali] was a big, big man, and if he'd have chosen to plant himself rather than box and move, he would have made a big impression as a hitter. Rodriguez made the same choice—actually, he made it first—to box rather than bang, and that took away some of his power. But Luis stopped people with his speed and accuracy and a barrage of punches, not one shot."

Encinosa offered a different perspective. "Clure Mosher, a sportswriter, once said that Luis couldn't punch, and the label stuck," he recalled. "This bothered Luis, so he sent Mosher a ticket to watch him fight Carl Hubbard, a guy with a rock of a chin. Luis knocked him out in four rounds. Then, later, Luis took on another tough fighter, Ricardo Falech, who'd never been stopped. After Luis kayoed him in three rounds, he shouted to Mosher, 'Who knocked him out? The referee?'"

Encinosa sites further evidence: "When Luis fought Denny Moyer, Moyer had 46 fights, with several against fighters who either were then, or had been, world champions. None of them could knock out Moyer. Luis played with him and stopped him in nine.

"And Luis was 34 years old when he fought Tony Mundine, who was actually a light heavy at the time. Luis knocked him out in the first."

One point that brought a unanimous response from the experts: Rodriguez deserves to be in the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

"He's in the California [version] hall of fame," explained Dundee, "but, you know, he never even got his plaque. If Emile Griffith is in the Hall, shouldn't Luis be there, too?"

Kaplan gave a verbal shrug. "Of course he should be there, but it's a popularity contest," he said. "Rodriguez had plenty of charisma as a fighter, but people tend to forget about him, so who knows?"

"On a given night, Luis could have beaten anyone in the world," said

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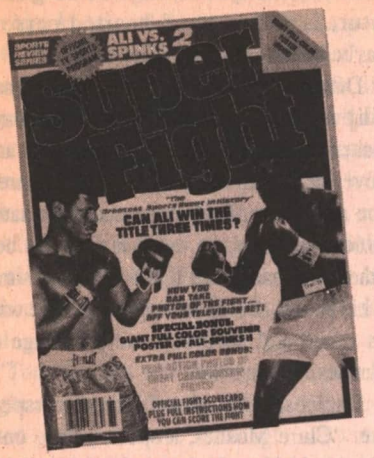

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Luis Rodriguez

(Continued from page 55)

Encinosa. "A lot of the guys he did beat are in the Hall of Fame. Why shouldn't he be? Ask Griffith if he thinks Luis should be there."

(For the record, Griffith was recently quoted by THE RING as saying of his rival, "He drove me crazy! ... Was he an all-time great fighter? I would say so!")

Two days before Rodriguez died, Steve Gordon, one of the writers and founders of the Internet Cyber Boxing Zone web page, contacted the Cuban. "I wanted to talk to him about a push that we were going to mount to get him on the next Hall of Fame ballot," explained Gordon. "In hindsight, he was obviously suffering, but his voice was strong. He seemed just a little bitter about not being in the Hall of Fame, and now I'm glad, in light of what followed, that he knew that efforts were going to be made on his behalf."

The funeral was a solemn, low-keyed affair. It was concluded before many of Rodriguez' admirers realized he had died. "We contacted Ferdie Pacheco, who became quite emotional when he heard the news," said Encinosa. "Ferdie is an artist, you know, and when he came to the funeral, he brought a painting of Luis and placed it next to the coffin. It wasn't a boxing picture. Much more fittingly, it was a picture of Luis smiling. And I thought, *that's how I want to remember him."*

And just as important, that's probably how Rodriguez would want to be remembered. ■

Jim Trunzo, The Ring's computer whiz, is based in Leechburg, Pennsylvania.

Harold Weston Jr.

(Continued from page 29)

weight title.

"I didn't know who Rocky Mattioli was, and I didn't care," recalled Weston. "After the draw with Gant, Gil made a phone call and asked me if I wanted to fight Mattioli in Australia in three weeks. I said yeah.

"Me and my father left two days later so I could get used to the climate and get the jet lag over with. I didn't see Mattioli until the day of the fight at the weigh-in. He was just another fighter to me.

"The first thing I thought was that this guy was too small. I told my father it was going to be no contest. I outboxed him from ringpost to ringpost. I outslicked him and everything.

"Everyone thought I was going to get wiped out. After the fight, I found out who Mattioli was and that he was knocking everybody out. This was the fight that put me in the top 10. I didn't even know he had knocked out Backus.

"Mattioli could punch—that was one thing he could do. After the fight, he said to me, 'I don't know where you come from, but you'll be champion of the world some day.' He told me I did things in that ring that he never saw before. Mattioli was one of the nicest fighters I ever met in my life."

•In 1972, **Hedgemon Lewis** decisioned Billy Backus to win the New York State version of the welterweight title. He and Weston met three years later. It was the penultimate fight of Lewis' long and successful career. Lewis, 29, was 53-6-3. In his previous fight, he had drawn with future champion Carlos Palomino. On December 12, 1975, Weston, 23, and Lewis fought to a 10-round draw.

"I thought Hedgemon beat Jose Napoles the first time they fought, but Napoles was champ and they gave him the decision," said Weston. "So coming into this fight, I knew I was fighting a real pro.

"Hedgemon was a consummate pro. He was so slick, slicker than any other fighter I fought before. This was my most educational fight. I had to dig down deep and pull out all the tricks to beat him. But Hedgemon already had a title fight lined up with [WBC champion] John Stracey, so the fight ended up a draw."

•Weston twice fought Hall of Famer **Wilfred Benitez**. On February 2, 1977, they were the featured bout at Madison Square Garden. The 18-year-old Benitez, 28-0, had just relinquished the junior welterweight title, while Weston, 24, was 20-6-4. That bout ended in a draw. At the time, it was the closest Benitez had come to a loss.

The rematch was contested for Benitez' WBC welterweight title on March 25,

1979, in San Juan. Benitez retained the title with a unanimous 15-round decision.

"I knew who Benitez was," said Weston. "I boxed him so many times in the gym. His father used to bring him to Gil's gym all the time. When we fought, it was a lot of fun. I was finally fighting a main event at Madison Square Garden, in the big room. I had fulfilled my dream. That was exciting.

"Benitez was a good fighter. He was quick. He could slip punches very well, and he was smooth along the ropes. He had good hand speed, decent power, and was a very gutsy kid. He would just keep you off-balance with his defense.

"Benitez kept you alert all the time. He was like a Willie Pep. He could make you miss and then hit you with four or five punches. Your eyes had to be sharp and your hands had to be quick.

"They called the first fight a draw. I felt I won, but back then, the Latino community was really supporting boxing in New York City. There had been some riots when Latino fighters had lost, and I really think they were concerned about another riot if Benitez lost. I wasn't a big puncher, but I did enough damage with my boxing ability to make everyone know I won the fight.

"The rematch was in Puerto Rico, and Bob Arum had promised the winner $1-million to fight Sugar Ray Leonard. It was 120 degrees at ringside that day. If the fight was close, I knew I wasn't going to get it. I thought I had a slight edge, but in Puerto Rico, you need a big edge."

•Weston's first shot at the welterweight title came on March 4, 1978, against WBA champion **Pipino Cuevas** at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles. Cuevas, 20, was 20-5. The Mexican had won the title in 1976, and had made four defenses, all knockout wins. His defense vs. Weston was stopped in the ninth round, when the challenger's corner feared Weston's jaw was broken. It was a competitive bout, with Weston surviving a shaky opening. At the time of the stoppage, Cuevas led comfortably on all three cards.

"The fight was in Los Angeles, and it was just like the Mattioli situation," recalled Weston. "I was in his backyard. We had public workouts at the Olympic and 5,000 people showed up. I boxed with three guys and I was real sharp. I dropped the last guy and the crowd went wild.

"I was in such superb condition. I was determined to win the title. I was at the point where I felt I was one of the best fighters in the world, and certainly in the welterweight division. I knew there was no other welterweight in the world who had the technical skill I had.

"The place was sold out, and there were 5,000 more people outside trying to get in. We needed a police escort just to get to the arena. (Weston and Clancy were showered with beer during their ring walk.)

"The fight was going the way we wanted it to go. We knew he was strong and a good puncher. But we were going 15 rounds at that time. I felt I would have won it if it wasn't stopped. I was a good body-puncher, and that was starting to take effect.

"Gil thought my jaw was broken so he stopped it. It turned out that it wasn't. When he stopped it, it bothered me. But I know Gil and my father loved me. I had people in my corner who cared about me. They wanted me to win just as much as I did."

•The last fight of Weston's career was on May 20, 1979, against **Thomas Hearns** in Las Vegas. It was less than two months after Weston had challenged Benitez for the WBC title. Hearns, 20, had a record of 18-0.

"I needed a fight like Hearns to get back into title contention," said Weston. "We were on our way to beating Hearns when my eye went. It was like someone had drawn a curtain across my eye. I could see light, but I couldn't see anything else.

"When I fought Tommy, at first he just came out to knock me out. If Tommy stood in front of me the whole fight, I could fight him. The bodyshots were working. Then he started moving and running, and I couldn't fight him anymore because I couldn't see him. In the first two or three rounds he was right there for me.

"Finally, I told my father I couldn't see out of my right eye and he stopped the fight. It was hard to explain to everyone because my eye wasn't swollen and it wasn't bleeding. But I couldn't see. When I found out after the fight that I had a detached retina, it was time to retire."

The Best of the Best: "It would be

(Continued on page 58)

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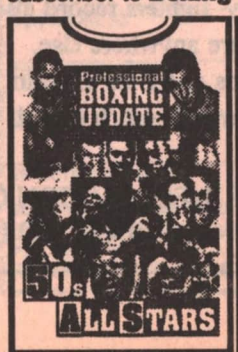

Harold Weston Jr.

(Continued from page 57)

between Lewis and Benitez. When it comes to all-around ability, I'd have to say Lewis was the best fighter I fought. He had real great boxing skills. Benitez was very good, don't get me wrong. But Hedgemon had something that always made you think. He was clever, he was slick. He made me think about everything I did. Any mistake I made, he made me pay. And that's the mark of a good fighter.

"The best puncher was Fausto Rodriguez (who outpointed Weston on October 7, 1974). He hit me so hard, he nearly made me cry. After that fight, I told my father that there is no way in the world anyone can hit harder than him. And if there is, you need to lock him up.

"I wouldn't say Hearns or Cuevas [were the best] because by the time I fought them, I knew what it was like to get hit hard. I was experienced already. It wasn't new to me the way it was when I fought Rodriguez. I think the first time you go through something like that, it leaves a bigger impression on you." ■

Heavyweights

(Continued from page 31)

between fights. Rock Newman, the heavyweight's manager, alibis by insisting Bowe always rises to a challenge. But if he can't win the little fights, he'll find the big ones slipping out of his reach.

6. How much does Evander Holyfield have left?

Some boxing writers reacted to the news that Holyfield was likely to soon challenge Mike Tyson as if they had been told Ali and Frazier were going to clash for a fourth time. In fact, since crawling to the finish line vs. Michael Moorer, Holyfield has reestablished himself as one of the world's five best heavyweights. He's beaten Ray Mercer and Bobby Czyz, and come within one punch of kayoing Riddick Bowe. Maybe "The Real Deal" shouldn't tempt fate by fighting on. But he doesn't seem to think so—and he's the only one who counts.

"If he fights smarter, he can go on and on and on," Don Turner, Holyfield's trainer, told us. "What Evander has on his side is he's always in shape and he believes in himself. If I didn't think he had something, I wouldn't be there. The big thing is he wants to win a third title, and I've got a gut feeling he's gonna do it."

7. Why is George Foreman fighting on?

As we went to press, Foreman, 47, was scheduled to fight Crawford Grimsley on September 15 in Tokyo. Does he plan on *ever* retiring? Even the members of Team Foreman can't fully explain Big George's thinking.

"After the [Axel] Schulz fight, he was dissatisfied," said Mort Sharnick, Foreman's adviser and publicist. "He has a sense of incompleteness. I think it stems

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from the aborted title reign and Zaire. But you have to be Freud to figure it all out."

According to Sharnick, the possibility still exists that Foreman will square off against Mike Tyson. "Foreman could be done as a fighter on HBO, and that would ease a major hurdle," he said. (Tyson fights on Showtime.) "There has been conversation, but I can't get into any detail."

Whether it's Tyson or not, look for Foreman to try and end his career against a big name, "so he can be recognized as the greatest heavyweight of his era," explained Sharnick.

8. Is Roy Jones serious about fighting at heavyweight?

Forget about the giants of the division, like Riddick Bowe and Lennox Lewis, who are too big. Forget about Mike Tyson, who is too *bad*. And forget about second-level fighters. What does Jones have to gain by defeating Jeremy Williams? The heavyweight Jones would like is IBF champion Michael Moorer, but Stan Levin, Jones' co-manager, acknowledges there's little chance Moorer would accept the bout. That's because if he beats Jones, Moorer beat a 168-pounder. And if Jones beats him, the loser might never recover from the embarrassment. (Hey, Floyd, is that disguise still available?)

The talk of Jones fighting the big boys is fun, but he's much more likely to try and unify the super middleweight title, or challenge one of the reigning light heavyweight champions, or fight Terry Norris in a catchweight bout.

9. Is Henry Akinwande to be taken seriously?

The temptation is to dismiss the 6'7" British heavyweight's one-punch, third-round kayo victory of Jeremy Williams. After all, Akinwande has always been a stick-and-move type, and Williams has a minor-league chin. But listen to what Don Turner, Akinwande's trainer, has to say: "In the last day of sparring [for the Williams fight], Akinwande broke [sparring partner] Lyle McDowell's jaw with the same right hand he would use to kayo Williams. You know what that does for a fighter's confidence? Punching is a matter of speed, and he's got real good speed."

Turner also said Akinwande listens better than any fighter he's ever trained, with the exceptions of Evander Holyfield and John David Jackson. If Akinwande continues to improve, he'll soon join the division's elite. And if he doesn't, he can take comfort in the fact that his big fight record will never be as bad as that of Frank Bruno.

10. Is Butterbean indeed "King Of The Four-Rounders"?

Yes, yes, and yes again! But whether in four-rounders or 24-rounders, the Bean can only dream of taking on world-class competition. He's been publicly challenging the likes of Mike Tyson, and we hope he's only kidding. We'd hate to think our favorite 300-pound heavyweight has gotten a fat head. ■

Puerto Ricans

(Continued from page 37)

Puerto Rico, that is decorated with a few mementos from Wilfred's glory days.

"Wilfred lost everything," said Senator Ramon Luis Rivera of the Puerto Rican legislature, who sponsored the bill to provide aid to Benitez. "Even if he lost the money, he brought fame to Puerto Rico at one time, and many people enjoyed that fame."

"The tragedy with Benitez is that he had financial advisers to protect him and ignored them," says Mafuz. "He had Bill Cayton and Jim Jacobs, the men who originally managed Mike Tyson into million-dollar purses and endorsement deals, but Benitez thought he knew better than they did."

Shortly before Benitez was ready to defend the WBC super welterweight title against Roberto Duran in 1982, Cayton and Jacobs invested $250,000 into a high-yield trust fund for the fighter that would have been worth $5-million when he retired. Instead, Benitez and his father, Gregorio, withdrew the money over a period of months, spent and gambled it away, then left Cayton and Jacobs for promoter Bob Arum, who would allow them to make their own mistakes. By the time Benitez ended his career in 1990, all of his career earnings were gone.

"Jimmy and I decided this was going to be one fighter who despite himself was going

(Continued on page 60)

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Puerto Ricans

(Continued from page 59)

to retire a wealthy man," Cayton told the New York *Daily News*. But it was not to be.

"When the ghetto mentality defeats long-range financial planning, the only net is poverty," Torres says.

Scoop Gallello, president of the International Veteran Boxers Association, an organization created to raise funds for fighters in need, says that unlike athletes from other professional sports, boxers often wind up with nothing because of what they perceive to be their career limitations.

"Baseball, basketball, and football players more often than not have graduated from high school, and most have completed college," Gallello says. "The benefits an education offers them are life options and financial savvy.

"Not so with boxers who are young men who put off school to enter the amateur and then professional ranks. A young man with new money and no education is a sitting duck for exploitation. The key is to prevent future boxers from making those mistakes, and helping those for whom it is too late to save."

Mafuz agrees. "The former champions who have gotten in trouble or have lost their money did not have the benefit of an education," he says. "I doubt they would have wound up where they are if they were trained to plan for the future."

One wonders if the following horror stories, all involving fighters from Puerto Rico, would have happened had the ghetto mentality been defeated:

•Three-division former world champion Wilfredo Gomez, ranked as the greatest Puerto Rican fighter in history, has fallen on tough times. In 1994, Gomez was arrested first on domestic violence charges, then for allegedly buying cocaine.

•Former WBA junior lightweight champion Samuel Serrano was jailed in 1987 for cocaine trafficking. He has since been released, and at age 43, has begun a ring comeback.

•Former WBA lightweight champion Edwin Rosario fell apart after his career wound down in the early-'90s. He became addicted to drugs and has been in and out of jail.

•Former WBC cruiserweight champion Carlos DeLeon, former WBA cruiserweight champion Ossie Ocasio, and former WBC super featherweight champion Alfredo Escalera, all of whom live in Puerto Rico, lost their ring earnings.

•Former world junior welterweight and lightweight champion Carlos Ortiz battled a drinking problem. He also invested his money in bad businesses, lost his ring earnings, and wound up driving a taxi cab in New York City.

•Former WBC lightweight champion Esteban DeJesus wound up broke and addicted to drugs. He died of AIDS.

The horror stories aside, there are successes that offer hope. Puerto Rico's first world champion, Sixto Escobar, who won the NBA bantamweight title in 1934, retired with most of his ring earnings.

"Intellectually, the biggest success story is Jose Torres," adds Mafuz. "He became an

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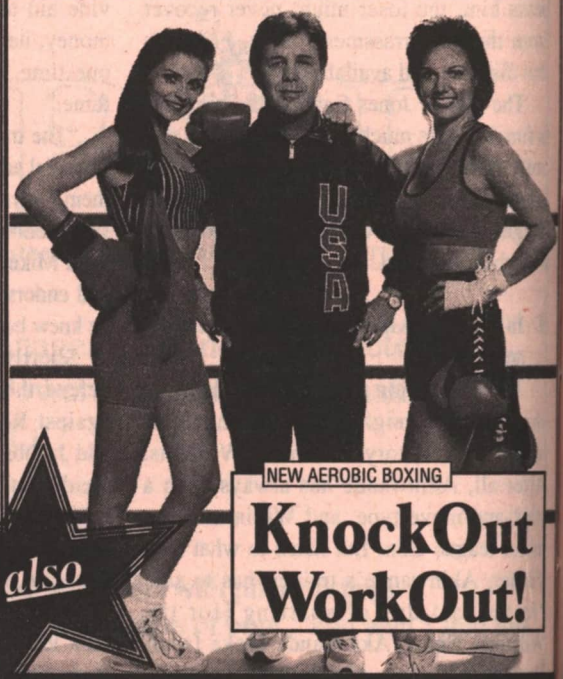

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"And financially, the biggest success story is Trinidad, who stands to become the wealthiest Puerto Rican boxer of all-time and is managed by a father who is careful with his finances."

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"De La Hoya is a Hispanic boxer from the ghetto who says that after he makes several million dollars as a fighter, he will go back to college before he is 30 to earn a degree in architecture," says Torres.

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In time, we'll learn if that can be said of Vazquez and Trinidad. If they don't learn from the mistakes of their predecessors, will they be doomed to repeat them? ■

Roberto Santiago is a freelance writer based in New York City.

Roy Jones

(Continued from page 42)

any points. Finally, I make a layup to tie the game at 11. With a second opportunity to win, I miss another jumper. Now Jones takes his game to the outside. He launches a 15-footer from the right elbow.

Swish. 12-11.

He launches another one.

13-11. Game.

Wasting no time with post-game smalltalk, we walk over to the boxing ring. Jones approaches a few of the center's employees and asks them to call the police.

"There is going to be a murder committed," he says calmly.

That gets my father's attention: "You know, if you hurt him, you're going to have to fight the three of us. (My brother Chris was taking the photos for this story.) This family sticks together."

"Make that *three* murders," responds Jones.

I put on my boxing shoes and insert my mouthpiece. Jones pulls two sets of gloves out of his bag. I am issued the Everlast leather, while he laces up his Reyes mitts, widely acknowledged as the gloves preferred by punchers. Clearly, Farhood had been outmaneuvered in the prefight negotiations, with Levin making sure his fighter had every advantage.

I scale 172 pounds. (Jones' IBF title is not on the line.) Judging by the champion's lean and muscular frame, he does not appear to be too far over the 168-pound super middleweight limit. The referee and timekeeper is Erik Stevens, fitness director at the Chelsea Piers. He asks us to touch gloves, and that turns out to be one of the few times I make contact with Jones.

At the sound of the bell, I find myself looking across the ring at the most dangerous non-heavyweight in boxing. He does not have war on his mind, but even in this casual setting, his speed and athleticism are intimidating.

What if he accidentally hits me? What if he hits me on purpose? I am in the same ring with ***Roy Jones.*** *What am I doing?*

As I had pondered this session in the days leading to the event, I imagined Jones allowing me to bring the fight to him. I had envisioned him dancing cutely and countering my lunging blows. That is not the case. From the moment the bell rings, he puts on the pressure, but with his presence, not his punches. I am trapped inside a 20-foot ring. He gave me plenty of room on the court, but gives none inside the ropes. The only reassurance that I'm not going to get starched is that Jones is still smiling.

Jones mirrors me for nearly the entire round. When I move to my left, he moves

(Continued on page 62)

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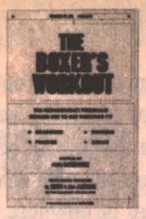

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Roy Jones

(Continued from page 61)

to his right, cutting off my escape route. When I step back, he steps forward. There is nowhere to run. I can appreciate how frustrated a Jones opponent must be when the end is near and there is nowhere to hide.

Jones forces me to be active; he makes me move or punch at all times. As I stay on my toes and try to move side to side, Jones is providing commentary: He says, "There's a jab," when I punch, and "Oh, look at that counter," when *he* punches. "Oh, another .. and another ... oh, oh, oh!"

He pursues me for the better part of three minutes. On the few occasions he allows me to lead, he counters my jabs with quick, probing rights, reminding me just how easy it would be for him to knock me cold. I land several jabs to his midsection, but not a single left lands cleanly on his head. When he's not parrying my jab, he's shifting his upper body so my punch bounces harmlessly off his shoulders. In one sequence, he drops his hands and dares me to land a jab. I step forward and throw four jabs in succession. With each punch, I move closer, narrowing the distance between us. He bobs and dips, slipping each jab. Levin, Farhood, publicist Greg Fritz, and my father watch with mouths wide-open as one jab after another misses the mark.

Part of the reason Jones is so difficult to beat is his unique style. He is brilliantly unorthodox, able to befuddle some of the best fighters in the world. At times, he fights with his arms slightly extended and drops punches over and through his opponent's defense. For me, this is another aspect of the Jones experience. He lands punches on my forehead as if knocking on a door, tapping me with a left, then a right, then a left. Knock, knock, knock.

When referee Stevens announces a minute remains in the round, Jones decides it is time to have some fun. The knocks come quicker—and with a little more force. There is an old boxing joke that goes, "I'll hit you so many times, you'll feel like you're surrounded." The joke is on me.

As the round closes, Jones treats me to a shoeshine. His hands a blur, he begins pumping uppercuts to my midsection. In anticipation of this flurry, I tighten my stomach and chest muscles. By the time he finishes, my pectorals are cramping.

Ding! Saved by the bell.

When it's over, Jones graciously raises my hand. It's a good thing because I don't think I could've done it on my own.

***

My Roy Jones Olympics are over. This was a trip into the unknown, an opportunity to compete against an elite athlete, even if only at half-speed. He was so secure in his own athletic ability, he never had to embarrass me. He never felt the need to demonstrate his superiority; he simply had fun, and so did I.

Two sports in one day, and I've lived to tell about it.

Hey, Farhood, tell Jones next time we play stickball. ■

Danny Hodge

(Continued from page 45)

In 1928, two years after he lost his world boxing crown, Berlenbach retired from the ring and became a pro grappler.

Berlenbach and Hodge are the only two athletes to reign as national amateur champions in boxing and wrestling, which was far from the mind of the lifelong Oklahoman when Hodge was growing up on a farm near Perry, in the central part of the Sooner State. Picking cotton, milking cows, and bailing hay were the top priorities of the young Hodge and his two brothers and sister, until the day their farmhouse burned down. Hodge's mother was seriously burned over 80 percent of her body and spent two years recovering in hospitals. His father was an oil wildcatter, so after his mother was hurt, Hodge was sent to live with a succession of relatives.

"They used to hit me," he recalls, "and I wanted to get so strong that the next hand that slapped me, I would break it."

He stumbled across his first wrestling class soon after that, and found the road to his dream. One year later, Hodge was state champion. In his last two years of high school, nobody could beat him. Upon graduation in 1951, the 18-year-old joined the Navy, and for two years he pinned everyone who got on the mat with him.

Hodge made the U.S. Olympic team in 1952, capturing fifth place at the Games in Helsinki. "I should have had the gold," he says. "But I told all the athletes there, 'I'll see you at the next Olympic Games.'"

In the interim, while he attended the University of Oklahoma on a wrestling scholarship, Hodge set and achieved another remarkable goal.

"I guess I made a commitment to myself. I asked God if there's any way he could let me go undefeated," he recalls.

Somebody up there liked him. "In the collegiate style of wrestling, he had no peer, indeed, no challenger," wrote wrestling historian Mike Chapman in his 1990 *Encyclopedia Of American Wrestling*. "He won every one of his 46 bouts for the University of Oklahoma, 36 of them by fall ... During his junior and senior years, he pinned 22 consecutive opponents. And no collegiate foe ever took him to the mat from the standing position."

Winner of three national championships at 178 pounds, Hodge was the cover subject of *Sports Illustrated* on April 1, 1957, the only amateur wrestler ever so recognized by the magazine. The cover story's author, Dan Parker, received several broken ribs when he insisted on a personal demonstration of the Sooner wrestler's vaunted strength and prowess.

"I didn't realize he was so fragile," Hodge says modestly.

In fact, wrote Chapman, "Had he not studied and carefully utilized proper wrestling techniques, [Hodge] might have maimed his opponents instead of dominating them."

True to his word, Hodge returned to the Olympic Games in 1956. In Melbourne, the 174-pounder who had not lost a match since the previous Olympics, pinned his first four opponents, but lost the gold medal to a Bulgarian on a bizarre ruling that was still causing controversy in amateur wrestling circles decades later. Just two seconds before the buzzer, both men hit the mat. Hodge, who was winning by a score of 8-1, rolled free and regained his feet, but in doing so, his shoulders brushed the mat, and the Bulgarian was awarded a fall and the match—even though he wasn't touching Hodge at the time.

But Hodge accepted the verdict and silver medal with dignity, and returned to the university to complete his degree. Hodge figured his days as a competitive athlete were over following his 1957 graduation. Then 25, he took a job with an oil company in Wichita, but suddenly veered off into a whole new career he had never even thought about until he was persuaded to put on some boxing gloves.

"I never had a pair of gloves on in my life," Hodge says. "I'd had a lot of street-fights, but never with gloves."

The announcement that Olympic wrestler Dan Hodge was going to become a boxer drew horselaughs from ring experts who said that wrestlers were too musclebound to make it with their fists. That was all Hodge had to hear.

"When somebody said I couldn't do something, that's when my antennae went up," he says. "I thought, *Hey, world, here I come!* I wanted to prove that not only could I wrestle, but I could fight, too."

Nevertheless, it was noted in *Sports Illustrated*, "There were predictions that he would be more or less murdered in a sport entirely new to him."

Talk about misplaced concern. Hodge promptly won the local, state, and Western regional Golden Gloves heavyweight titles in 1958, and proceeded to the national tournament at Chicago Stadium, where he knocked out every opponent but one en route to the championship.

As on the mat, his forte in the ring was his incredible power. Nebraska's Buddy Traux had years of experience on Hodge, but was knocked down by his jabs and stopped.

"In the dressing room, he's crying," recalls Hodge. "I said, 'Buddy, I didn't mean to hurt you.' He said, 'Dan, I been fighting for eight years, and I never been hit that hard. I'm quitting!'"

Back then, the winners in Chicago would go on to fight the New York City Golden Gloves champions at Madison Square Garden. Inter-city champions crowned that year included future world titlists Emile Griffith (147 pounds) and Jose Torres (160), but before nearly 12,000 fans in the Garden, they were overshadowed by "Dynamite Dan."

His opponent was Charles Hood, a 6'3", 230-pound boxer whose arms, Hodge recollects, "were bigger than my legs. He looked like Joe Palooka." It was only Hodge's 17th fight, and in the first round, Hood pounded the 6'1", 190-pound midwesterner all over the ring, even knocking Hodge over in a complete somersault. At the bell ending the round, "I didn't even know where my corner was," Hodge says.

But in round two, using a right that "connected like a woodsman's ax," according to the *Sports Illustrated* account of the match, Hodge chopped Hood down for the count, and then "couldn't get out of the ring for 10 minutes as cheering fight fans jammed the aisles."

It had been about two years since the retirement of undefeated heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano, and in the hard-hitting Hodge, some now saw the reincarnation of "The Brockton Blockbuster." Hodge's potential attracted no less than George Gainford, who was the manager of Sugar Ray Robinson, and became Hodge's trainer as the Oklahoman began his pro ring career by knocking out Norm Jackson in the first round in June 1958.

"I didn't enjoy boxing like I did wrestling," says Hodge, who nonetheless went 5-1 in his rookie year. He was stopped in his third bout by Art Norris, but a month later won a 10-round decision in a rematch.

In his ninth pro bout, in February 1959, Hodge knocked out Garvin Sawyer in eight rounds in Miami Beach. In 20 previous bouts, Sawyer, the 1954 national amateur heavyweight champion, had failed to hear the final bell but once, and had gone the distance against contenders Zora Folley, Bob Satterfield, and Bert Whitehurst.

Hodge was on the verge of a top-10 ranking, and a victory in his next bout would have earned him a title opportunity against then-champion Floyd Patterson, who'd already been offered $250,000 to meet the Sooner. Hodge's opponent in that April 1959 match was Nino Valdes, a 35-year-old longtime contender from Cuba whose first pro fight had come in 1941, when Hodge was still dreaming about striking back at abusive relatives.

According to the Associated Press wire service report of the fight, the 48-17 Valdes, who had a 20-pound pull in weight, "opened cuts on Hodge's face in

(Continued on page 64)

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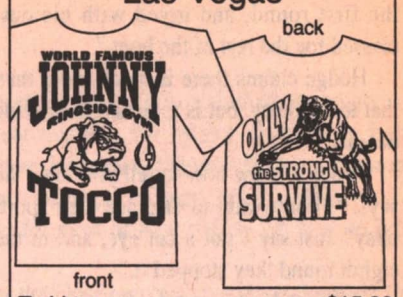

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Danny Hodge

(Continued from page 63)

the first round, and toyed with his outclassed foe the rest of the bout."

Hodge claims there is much more than that to the story, but is reluctant to provide details.

"I don't know how to tell you this," he says. "I don't want to disgrace their sport, okay? Just say I got a cut eye, and in the eighth round they stopped it."

But then Hodge says he found out later that the cut was actually inflicted on him by one of his own seconds. The purpose of such nefariousness, he adds, was to build demand for a rematch. He also says he was guaranteed 50 percent of the gate receipts for the Valdes fight, but ended up getting paid nothing. "When I didn't get a nickel," he recalls, "I said 'I'm through.'"

Hodge announced his retirement from boxing and went back to "the sport I love." Within nine months, he won the world junior heavyweight wrestling title. Traveling around the world as a full-time professional matman, he would hold the belt for the next 18 years.

"I wanted the world to see the best. I wanted the fans to know what a [real] wrestler was," says Hodge, drawing a distinction between the mat world then and the dayglo buffoonery on tap today.

"It went too much showboat," Hodge says. "They don't wrestle like we used to. They got more bodybuilders than wrestlers now."

Hulk Hogan vs. Dan Hodge? The "Hulkster" would last about 30 seconds.

In his mid-40s, Hodge was still going strong when he fell asleep at the wheel of his car one night in Louisiana, struck a bridge, and ended up in the water. He heard bones in his neck crinkle, and says a voice in his head told him, "Hold your neck!" He did, and somehow managed to get out of his overturned vehicle. Doctors said if his broken neck had moved another quarter-inch, he would have been paralyzed for life.

While the injury necessitated his retirement from wrestling, today the Perry strongman is in excellent health and physical condition. "I feel good. I don't have a belly that hides my belt buckle," says the member of four separate sports halls of fame. (Wrestling's top annual award is named after him.) Hodge creates and markets woodcrafts with his daughter, Linda, and recently appeared in his first feature movie, a wrestling film called *One More Shot*, based loosely on his career.

He's proud of his accomplishments on the mat and in the ring. "I did something that hardly anyone else had done, excelled at four sports—amateur and pro wrestling, and amateur and pro boxing," he says. "This is why they call me like a legend now. I had this burning desire in me."

Hodge makes many personal appearances, and "everywhere I go I have to squeeze the apples and make juice," he says, referring to his most famous and spectacular strongman feat. It started back in high school, when in his quest to become stronger than anybody else, Hodge spent hours squeezing rolled newspapers in each hand. He became powerful enough to hold a large, hard apple in his hand and crush it into apple sauce with one squeeze.

So go ahead, tough guy, and tell Hodge he's full of the stuff himself when it comes to the boxing vs. wrestling debate. But if you know what's good for you, refrain from telling the man who knows the ropes in both better than anybody else alive to get a grip. ■

Pete Ehrmann, a frequent contributor to The Ring, is based in West Allis, Wisconsin.

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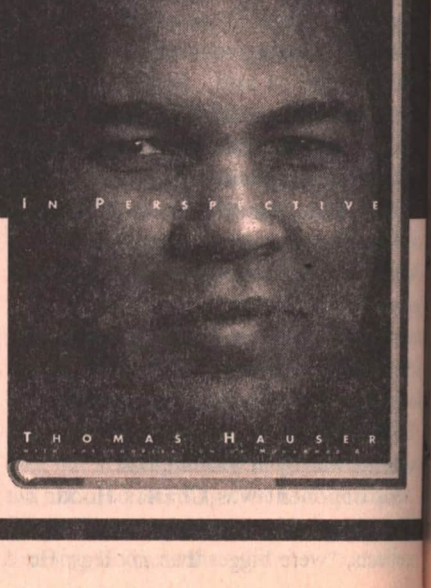


BOXING COLLECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

By Don Scott

Most collectors love a challenge, and one of the most interesting is to collect all the programs, tickets, and posters from some of boxing's great rivalries. I'm talking about multi-fight matchups like Ali-Frazier, Graziano-Zale, Patterson-Johansson, Leonard-Hearns, Dempsey-Tunney, Louis-Schmeling, and Saddler-Pep. Here's what you ought to know before taking on the challenge. (Since posters and tickets are very hard to find for most of these fights, I'll stick to programs for now.)

The program for Ali-Frazier III is very different from the closed-circuit variety produced in the States. The on-site program from Manila is incredibly rare. The closed-circuit program, or souvenir program, has a full face shot of Ali on the front cover and Frazier on the back. This is called the Cutty Sark program, named for the company that produced it. A bona fide original from the Philippines may cost you $700 or more, the Cutty Sark variety less than $100. The on-site programs for Ali-Frazier I and II are fairly easy to obtain and go for about $150.

It has taken me 12 years to complete my collection of the three Graziano-Zale fight programs, and I had to look everywhere. Programs from all three fights are tough to find, but the toughest is Graziano-Zale I. It is a 64-page beauty from the Yankee Stadium fight. This is perplexing because programs from the New York ballpark fights aren't generally rare.

Dempsey-Tunney and Louis-Schmeling are fairly easy to find, but, priced in the $250-$400 range, are quite expensive. The full tickets to both pairs of fights can also be found. They're also quite pricey. But expect to pay in the thousands for one of the posters. The programs have survived the years because they are truly beautiful souvenirs.

The best rivalry to focus on is probably Leonard-Hearns because the programs for both fights can be found for $50 or less. The posters are also available, but the tickets are very scarce.

Programs can also be found for the three Patterson-Johansson fights. A recent copy of my *Boxing Collector's News* listed the three programs for $225. That's a steal in today's market, but the seller was a dealer who really knows his stuff.

Probably the toughest of the programs to collect is Saddler-Pep. The first two bouts of the four-fight series took place at Madison Square Garden. MSG programs are fairly plain magazines, and the cover did not change throughout the '40s. In fact, during a year of fights, the only thing different from program to program was the four-page insert that was slipped into the magazines.

Collecting these programs is complicated by several factors. First, the inserts often slid out and were lost. Sometimes, fans kept the inserts and threw away the magazines. Also, considering the sheer number of magazines and inserts produced over the course of a year. I am convinced no one insert is rarer than the next. If you're looking for any MSG fight program from the '40s, no problem. But if you have something specific in mind, you're just going to have to keep looking and praying.

Saddler-Pep III, held in September 1950, is a smaller Yankee Stadium program and is easy to find. The fourth bout came at the Polo Grounds in September 1951, and for some reason, the program is hard to find. I secured the program for the third fight 12 years ago, one for one of the MSG fights five years ago, and lucked into the books for the other two bouts this past year. It was a tough set to complete.

By the way, I'm still working on the Robinson-LaMotta fights. In 15 years, I have the programs of only two of their six fights, including their last bout, a really beautiful magazine.

Of course, there are rivalries that are relatively fresh, and programs to such fights are relatively inexpensive, but still a challenge. How about Holyfield-Bowe, Pazienza-Haugen, or Carbajal-Gonzalez? Completing a series of the programs for these fights is fun, but if you're seeking instant gratification, try baseball cards. ■

Don Scott is editor and publisher of ***Boxing Collectors' News*** *and may be contacted through* THE RING.

WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by THE RING are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the IBF and WBC ratings were compiled as of July 1996, and the WBA ratings were compiled as of June 1996.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Mike Tyson (USA)	C	1	–
Bruce Seldon (USA)	–	C	–
Michael Moorer (USA)	–	–	C
Lennox Lewis (GB)	1	7	6
Oliver McCall (USA)	2	2	2
Frank Bruno (GB)	3	8	7
Ray Mercer (USA)	4	–	–
Larry Donald (USA)	5	–	–
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	6	12	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	7	4	–
Andrew Golota (POL)	8	10	8
Orlin Norris (USA)	9	3	5
Tim Witherspoon (USA)	10	–	11
Tony Tucker (USA)	15	5	–
Vaughn Bean (USA)	13	6	4
Crawford Grimsley (USA)	23	9	–
Francois Botha (SA)	–	–	1
Corrie Sanders (SA)	11	–	3
Buster Mathis Jr. (USA)	24	–	9
Obed Sullivan (USA)	18	–	10

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	C	–	–
Nate Miller (USA)	–	C	–
Alfred Cole (USA)	–	–	C
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	1	2	4
Akim Tafer (FRA)	2	7	10
Robert Daniels (USA)	3	3	6
Terry Dunstan (GB)	4	12	8
David Izeqwire (NIG)	5	–	7
Gary Ballard (SA)	6	–	–
Jacob Mofokeng (SA)	7	–	3
Patrice Aouissi (FRA)	8	5	–
Chris Okoh (GB)	9	–	9
Alexei Ilin (RUS)	10	–	–
Adolpho Washington (USA)	–	1	1
Torsten May (GER)	–	4	2
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	24	6	–
Brian Laspada (USA)	18	8	–
Rick Lamontagne (USA)	–	9	–
Arimetea Silva (BRA)	–	10	–
Uriah Grant (USA)	23	–	5

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	C	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	C	–
Henry Maske (GER)	–	–	C
Montell Griffin (USA)	1	3	2
Mike McCallum (USA)	2	8	4
Eddy Smulders (HOLL)	3	1	12
Crawford Ashley (GB)	4	–	7
William Guthrie (USA)	5	2	1
Nicky Piper (GB)	6	–	–
Merqui Sosa (DR)	7	–	–
Lincoln Carter (USA)	8	–	11
Richard Frazier (USA)	9	–	–
Mark Prince (GB)	10	–	–
Michael Nunn (USA)	–	4	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	5	6
Duran Williams (USA)	–	6	5
Gary Ballard (SA)	–	7	10
Leif Keiski (SWE)	27	9	–
Stephan Anghern (SWI)	–	10	9
Darrin Allen (USA)	22	–	3
Graciano Rocchigiani (GER)	–	–	8

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vincenzo Nardiello (ITA)	C	–	–
Frank Liles (USA)	–	C	–
Roy Jones (USA)	–	–	C
Henry Wharton (GB)	1	–	–
Thulane Malinga (SA)	2	–	–
Luciano Torres (BRA)	3	1	11
Frederic Seillier (FRA)	4	10	7
Michael Nunn (USA)	5	–	–
Joe Calzaghe (GB)	6	–	6
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	7	–	9
Bryant Brannon (USA)	8	5	1
Steve Little (USA)	9	4	10
Robin Reid (GB)	10	–	–
Henry Wharton (GB)	–	2	5
Nigel Benn (GB)	–	3	12
Mike Makata (NZ)	–	6	–
Mauricio Amaral (BRA)	22	7	8
Tim Littles (USA)	–	8	–
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	–	9	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	14	–	2
Segundo Mercado (ECU)	25	–	3
Jean-Claude M'biye (FRA)	–	–	4

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	C	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	–	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Richie Woodhall (GB)	1	–	7
Otis Grant (CAN)	2	6	–
Quincy Taylor (USA)	3	–	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	4	4	–
John David Jackson (USA)	5	1	1
Julian Jackson (USA)	6	–	–
Robert Allen (USA)	7	–	2
Robert McCracken (GB)	8	–	3
Alexander Zaitsev (RUS)	9	–	5
Stephane Ouellette (CAN)	10	–	–
Peter Venancio (BRA)	18	2	–
Shinji Takehara (JAP)	–	3	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	–	5	–
Chongmo Kim (KOR)	28	7	–
Aaron Davis (USA)	16	8	–
Glen Johnson (USA)	–	9	8
Derrick Rolon (USA)	25	10	11
Lloyd Bryan (USA)	–	–	4
Alex Rios (USA)	–	–	6
Juan Carlos Viloria (COL)	27	–	9
Bo James (USA)	–	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Terry Norris (USA)	C	–	C
Julio Cesar Vasquez (ARG)	–	C	–
Carl Daniels (USA)	1	1	2
Raul Marquez (USA)	2	7	1
Ahmed Dottuev (BALK)	3	–	–
Troy Waters (AUSTRL)	4	–	–
David Ciarlante (ITA)	5	–	–
Faouzi Hattab (FRA)	6	–	–
Ernie Artango (AUSTRL)	7	–	–
Paul Vaden (USA)	8	–	7
Alex Rios (USA)	9	–	–
Said Bennajem (FRA)	10	–	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	–	2	–
Alejandro Ugueto (VEN)	–	3	–
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	–	4	5
Johnson Tshuma (SA)	–	5	–
Giovanni Pretorious (SA)	–	6	3
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	–	8	10
Javier Castillejo (SPA)	19	9	–
Engels Pedroza (VEN)	17	10	–
Anthony Stephens (USA)	–	–	4
Steve Foster (GB)	15	–	6
Adrian Dodson (GB)	16	–	8
Rossman Henry (COL)	–	–	9

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Pernell Whitaker (USA)	C	–	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Wilfredo Rivera (PR)	1	3	3
Patrick Charpentier (FRA)	2	4	2
Derrell Coley (USA)	3	–	8
Pedro Sanchez (DR)	4	9	11
Ralph Jones (USA)	5	–	–
James Page (USA)	6	–	–
Jose Luis Navarro (SPA)	7	–	–
Gary Jacobs (GB)	8	–	10
Andrei Pestryaev (RUS)	9	2	–
Hiroyuki Yoshino (JAP)	10	–	–
Oba Carr (USA)	–	1	1
Sean Sullivan (NZ)	–	5	–
Pat Coleman (USA)	–	6	–
Andrew Murray (GUY)	–	7	6
Jufrison Pontoh (RUS)	–	8	–
Donald Stoke (USA)	–	10	–
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	–	4
Yori Boy Campas (MEX)	–	–	5
Tony Martin (USA)	–	–	7
Ray Lovato (USA)	28	–	9

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	C	–	–
Juan Coggi (ARG)	–	C	–

Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	–	–	C
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	1	–	–
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	2	3	–
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	3	1	–
Ismael Chaves (ARG)	4	–	–
Charles Murray (USA)	5	6	7
Freddie Ladd (USA)	6	–	–
Soren Sondergaard (DEN)	7	–	4
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	8	–	6
David Kamau (USA)	9	4	3
Jong Hoon Yuh (KOR)	10	–	–
Frankie Randall (USA)	–	2	–
Jose Barbosa (VEN)	12	5	–
Jong Hoon Yuh (KOR)	–	7	–
Jan Bergman (SA)	–	8	1
Hiromu Kuwata (JAP)	22	9	–
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	14	10	–
Freddie Pendleton (USA)	–	–	2
Jermal Corbin (USA)	–	–	5
Ralph Jones (USA)	–	–	8
Virgil McClendon (USA)	–	–	9
Leonardo Mas (PR)	–	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	C	–	–
Ornubek Nazarov (JAP)	–	C	–
Philip Holiday (SA)	–	–	C
Steve Johnston (USA)	1	4	6
Shane Mosley (USA)	2	10	–
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	3	–	–
Angel Mona (FRA)	4	5	–
Ivan Robinson (USA)	5	6	1
Lamar Murphy (USA)	6	–	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	7	3	–
Ricardo Silva (ARG)	8	–	–
David Dodi Tetteh (GHA)	9	11	12
Manuel Fernandez (FRA)	10	–	–
Leavander Johnson (USA)	–	1	9
Fred Ladd (USA)	–	2	2
Adrianus Taroreh (INDO)	–	7	–
Carlos Fernandez (PORT)	–	8	–
Oleg Marchenko (RUS)	–	9	–
Demetrius Ceballos (USA)	28	–	3
Miguel Julio (COL)	–	–	4
John Lark (USA)	–	–	5
Joel Perez (USA)	–	–	7
Billy Schwer (GB)	14	–	8
Joel Diaz (USA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Azumah Nelson (GHA)	C	–	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	C	–
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	–	C
Anatoly Alexandrov (RUS)	1	2	4
Gabriel Ruelas (USA)	2	–	–
Roberto Garcia (USA)	3	6	2
Ulrich Johnson (TRIN)	4	11	–
Genaro Hernandez (USA)	5	–	–
Boris Sinitsin (RUS)	6	–	5
Justin Juuko (UGA)	7	–	–
Djamel Lifa (FRA)	8	7	8
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	9	–	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	10	12	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	–	1	10
Carlos Gerena (PR)	–	3	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	4	–
Orlando Soto (PAN)	–	5	–
Yumato Mitani (JAP)	–	8	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	9	–
Douglas Villarreal (COL)	11	10	11
Tracy Patterson (USA)	–	–	1
John Brown (USA)	–	–	3
Cliff Samardin (AUSTRL)	–	–	6
Jaime Rangel (COL)	–	–	7
Wilson Rodriguez (DR)	–	–	9

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Luisito Espinoza (PHIL)	C	–	–
Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)	–	C	–
Tom Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Carlos Rios (ARG)	1	–	–
Cesar Soto (MEX)	2	7	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	3	–	–
Billy Hardy (GB)	4	5	4
Yuji Watanabe (JAP)	5	1	–
Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)	6	–	–
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	7	–	1
David Santos (USA)	8	2	3
Luis Antonio Navarro (SPA)	9	–	–
Samuel Duran (PHIL)	10	–	–
Eloy Rojas (VEN)	–	3	–
Miguel Arrozal (PHIL)	–	4	–
Ilham Lahia (INDO)	–	6	–
Ever Beleno (COL)	–	8	7
Roque Cassiani (COL)	–	9	–
Arnulfo Castillo (USA)	–	10	9
Welcome Ncita (SA)	–	–	2
Jose Badillo (PR)	–	12	5
November Ntshingila (AUSTRL)	–	–	6
Victor Polo (COL)	–	–	8
Colin McMillan (GB)	21	–	10

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Daniel Zaragoza (MEX)	C	–	–
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	C	–
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	C
Erik Morales (MEX)	1	4	–
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	2	–	–
Yuichi Kasai (JAP)	3	1	–
Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)	4	–	–
Bong Chul Kim (KOR)	5	6	–
Enrique Jupiter (MEX)	6	–	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	7	12	–
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	8	–	4
Harold Mestre (COL)	9	–	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	10	–	–
Yober Ortega (VEN)	–	2	–
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	3	–
Vincenzo Belcastro (ITA)	16	5	1
Jesus Salud (USA)	13	7	9
Tsuyoshi Harada (JAP)	12	8	–
Mike Garcia (USA)	–	9	–
Ramon Guzman (VEN)	–	10	–
Nurhuda (INDO)	–	–	2
Kennedy McKinney (USA)	–	–	3
Jesus Perez (COL)	–	–	5
Rey Jamil (PHIL)	–	–	6
Victor Llerena (COL)	–	–	7
Aristead Clayton (USA)	22	–	8
Angel Chacon (PR)	20	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	C	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	C	–
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	C
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	1	–	–
Jose Luis Bueno (MEX)	2	–	–
Victor Rabanales (MEX)	3	–	–
Pastor Maurin (ARG)	4	9	–
In Jin Chi (KOR)	5	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	6	7	7
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	7	–	10
Khaoyai Mahasarakam (THAI)	8	–	–
Chang Kyun Oh (KOR)	9	12	–
Li Gwang Sik (KOR)	10	–	–
Daorung Chuvatana (THAI)	–	1	5
Yong Hoon Lee (KOR)	–	2	–
Lukhin CP Gym (THAI)	–	3	–
John Armour (GB)	–	4	–
Angel Chacon (PR)	–	5	–
Abraham Torres (VEN)	–	6	–
Tim Austin (USA)	19	8	1
Setsuo Kawamasu (JAP)	12	10	–
Juvenal Berrio (COL)	–	–	2
Adrian Kaspari (INDO)	22	–	3
Harold Mestre (COL)	–	–	4
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	–	6
Ancee Gedeon (USA)	–	–	8
Sergio Reyes (USA)	–	–	9

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Hiroshi Kawashima (JAP)	C	–	–
Alimi Goitia (VEN)	–	C	–
Harold Grey (COL)	–	–	C
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	6	–
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	2	–	–
Luis Bolanos (COL)	3	5	–
Hipolito Saucedo (USA)	4	–	–
Cecilio Espino (USA)	5	–	–
Adonis Cruz (NIC)	6	7	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	7	1	–
Luis Benavides (COL)	8	11	10
Domingo Sosa (DR)	9	–	–
Jinh Yong Yuh (KOR)	10	–	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	30	2	–
Veeraphol Sahaprom (THAI)	19	3	–
Danny Romero (USA)	–	4	2
Jai Chin Lim (KOR)	12	8	–
Satoshi Iida (JAP)	–	9	–
Jose Alonso Moreno (MEX)	29	10	–
Jaji Sibali (SA)	18	–	1
Ubadel Soto (COL)	–	–	3
Andy Agosto (PR)	24	–	4
Carlos Salazar (ARG)	22	–	5
Jose Diaz (USA)	–	–	6
Ricky Matulessi (INDO)	–	–	7
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	25	–	8
Polito Saucedo (USA)	–	–	9

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Yuri Arbachakov (RUS)	C	–	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	C	–
Mark Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Isaias Zamudio (USA)	1	4	9
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	2	–	1
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	3	8	10
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	4	–	–
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	5	–	–
Yong Soon Chang (KOR)	6	6	–
Chokchai Chokviwat (THAI)	7	–	–
Takato Toguchi (JAP)	8	9	–
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	9	11	–
Enrique Orozco (MEX)	10	–	–
Evangelino Perez (PAN)	–	1	3
Daniel Ward (SA)	20	2	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	18	3	–
Hiroki Ioka (JAP)	28	5	–
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	16	7	–
Takashi Ohba (JAP)	21	10	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	–	–	2
Luigi Camputaro (ITA)	11	–	4
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	5
Yodchingchai Sornthong (THAI)	–	–	6
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	7
Abdi Pohan (INDO)	–	–	8

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	C	–	–
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	–	C	–
Michael Carbajal (USA)	–	–	C
Chiquita Gonzalez (MEX)	1	–	3
Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR)	2	4	4
Phanieng Sasiprabha-Poontarat (THAI)	3	11	–
Shiro Yahiro (JAP)	4	12	–
Yamil Caraballo (COL)	5	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	6	–	–
Antonio Perez (MEX)	7	–	–
Luis Doria (COL)	8	–	7
Ric Magramo (PHIL)	9	–	–
Ali Galvez (CHILE)	10	–	–
Pichitnoi Sithbangprachan (THAI)	–	1	–
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	2	–
Hi Yong Choi (KOR)	–	3	–
Sinn Ploenchit (THAI)	–	5	–
Jin Ho Kim (KOR)	–	6	–
Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI)	–	7	–
Jesus Chong (MEX)	–	8	–
Yuichi Hosono (JAP)	–	9	–
Yong Jin Kim (KOR)	27	10	–
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	30	–	1
P.S. Wonjongkam (THAI)	–	–	2
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	5
Phichitnoi Chor Siriwat (THAI)	11	–	6
Onewin Chareon (THAI)	–	–	8
Jesus Chong (USA)	–	–	9
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	10

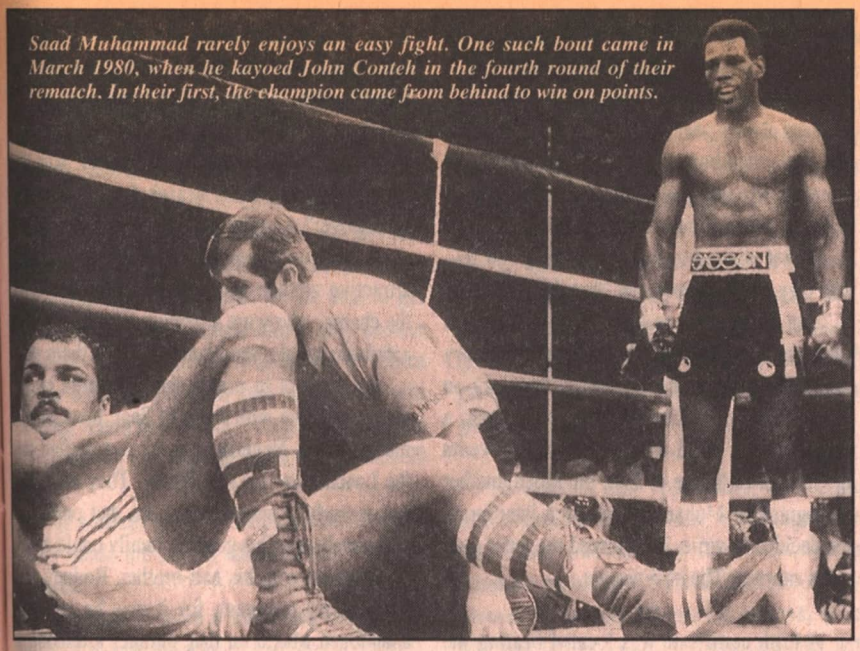
STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	C	–	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	–	C	–
Ratanapol Voraphin (THAI)	–	–	C
Rocky Lin (JAP)	1	3	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	2	2	–
Ala Villamor (PHIL)	3	9	6
Sinn Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	4	–	–
Morgan Ndumo (SA)	5	–	8
Hyung Sok Kang (KOR)	6	–	11
Sang Chul Lee (KOR)	7	–	–
Myung Sup Park (KOR)	8	–	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	9	1	–
Payak Nakornluang (THAI)	10	–	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	12	4	3
Yamil Caraballo (COL)	–	5	–
Noel Tunacao (INDO)	–	6	–
Kermin Guardia (COL)	–	7	–
Rhindile Ngingi (SA)	–	8	–
Javier Medina (NIC)	–	10	–
Osvaldo Guerrero (MEX)	–	–	1
Juan Herrera (COL)	17	11	2
Mongol Charoen (THAI)	–	–	4
Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)	28	–	5
Gustavo Vera (VEN)	19	–	7
Lee Sandoval (NIC)	25	–	9
Joseph Orgalesa (PHIL)	–	–	10

RING

CLASSIC

SAAD MUHAMMAD'S SEARCH FOR HIS ELUSIVE IDENTITY— INSIDE THE RING AND OUT

From The Ring, July 1981



Saad Muhammad rarely enjoys an easy fight. One such bout came in March 1980, when he kayoed John Conteh in the fourth round of their rematch. In their first, the champion came from behind to win on points.

By Nigel Collins

"Show me a hero and I'll write you a tragedy"

–F. Scott Fitzgerald

The pine barrens suddenly give way to the salt marches, and there, nesting among the mist and smog, is Atlantic City. Until casino gambling was legalized here, this tattered old seaside resort managed to reach the public consciousness but once a year—that for the Miss America Pageant. Now, hardly a week goes by when one of the networks is not beaming a live boxing match from the saltwater taffy capital of the world. The coming weekend would be no exception. Matthew Saad Muhammad was scheduled to defend the WBC light heavyweight title against Murray Sutherland.

There, in the lobby of Resorts International, the host casino for the upcoming to-do, was the reigning light heavyweight champion, Saad Muhammad. Returning from late-morning roadwork scant days before the fight, the champ seemed a celebrity unnoticed, strangely anonymous in the hotel where, less than a week later, he would be shedding blood for the amusement of the high-rollers in the Superstar Theater, as well as for millions of boxing aficionados across the nation.

To the world of boxing, Saad Muhammad is "Mr. Excitement," "The Comeback King," or, as one wag put it, "Boxing's Boomerang." His fights are an exercise in nail-biting. Seldom content to tally an easy win, Saad has staged more comebacks than Frank Sinatra. Blessed with a deluxe knockout punch, celestial recuperative powers, and enough heart to stock a brigade of Marines, he is the prototype of today's sluggers. The idol of those among us who wallow in the triumph of brute strength over science and skill. His is not the manly art of self-defense, but rather the savage art of destruction, if not self-destruction.

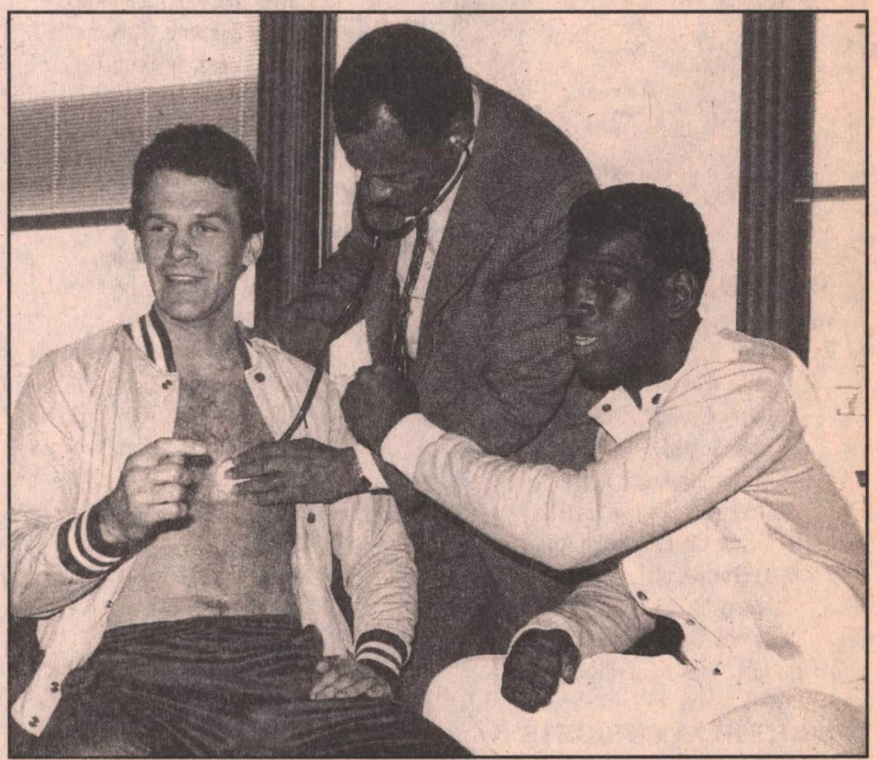
It is an image that contradicts his demeanor away from the ring. For this reason, he has yet to receive the public's acclaim. For the populace expects its brawling heroes to be wild and reckless, living their private lives the way they fight. If they look for that in Saad Muhammad, they are sure to be disappointed. For there they will find no Duran-like machismo, nor the private life of a "Neon Leon." Instead, they will find a gentle manchild, confident of his physical prowess, yet still aware of his shortcomings.

***

The champion was comfortably housed in a three-room suite on the 10th floor, overlooking the Boardwalk and the blue-gray Atlantic Ocean. The empty rides on the Steeplechase Pier whirled through their helter-skelter gyrations even though there were few customers on "The Boards." Matthew adjourned to his bedroom and flopped on the bed with a sigh. He stretched out, clasped his hands behind his head, wiggled his toes, and, with scant prompting, began to talk.

"I would like to make the people aware that they're not the only ones that have problems," he said wearily. "Some people think, *Hey, you got it good. You are financially equipped, so that you can pay your way out.* I have problems, too, you know. You can't pay your mind to say, 'Okay, have a good day.'"

For as long as he can remember, Matt has



Challenger Murray Sutherland gets the once-over before his April 1981 challenge of Saad Muhammad. As courageous as the champion has proven to be, the doctor probably didn't bother to check his heart as well. He has made six successful defenses since winning the title.

known about those bad days. His worst came when he was only five years old. On June 16, 1959, he was found by a Philadelphia policewoman, aimlessly wandering along the Ben Franklin Parkway, lost and scared.

The story of Saad's abandonment and rise to the top of his profession has been told—and retold—by the media until it has become almost a cliche, a tale steeped in the Hollywood tradition. According to the popular version, after a futile search for his parents, the police turned him over to the Catholic Social Service, where the nuns named him "Matthew Franklin." Matthew, Saad himself speculates, because of his own lisped mispronunciation of the name Maxwell, and Franklin for the parkway upon which he was found.

Eventually, Saad was placed in the home of John and Bertha Santos, a loving Portuguese foster family who treated him as one of their own. Mrs. Santos died a few years ago, shortly after Matt won the title, but her husband is still very much a part of Muhammad's life, and is ringside for most of his fights.

Saad always yearned to fill in the gaps in his life, and when boxing brought him wealth, he offered a $10,000 reward for information leading to the whereabouts of his lost family.

"I just wanted to know why they did it—why they never claimed me," he said.

Ann Young was reading a copy of *Jet* last year when something clicked in her memory bank. The picture accompanying the story on Saad looked a lot like little Maxie Loach, a neighborhood child who had been lost years ago. She wasn't sure at first, but when another photograph of Muhammad ran in a later issue, she decided to write. Matt turned the letter over to his attorney. The hunt was on.

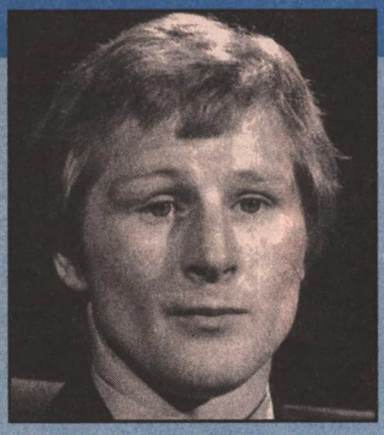
***

A birth certificate was located bearing the name Maxwell Antonio Loach, dated August 5, 1954. Things moved quickly after that. It was discovered that the mother was dead and the father's fate unknown. The remainder of the Loach family, four half-sisters and a half-brother, were found in the Philadelphia area. Was this for real? Was Saad's search for his identity finally over? A meeting was arranged.

A snapshot taken that day shows a group of attractive women and a man clustered around the champ, who wore a bemused smile. There is a definite facial resemblance between them all.

An attempt to match the footprints on the birth certificate with those of Saad have proved inconclusive. Nevertheless, he is satisfied that the Loaches *are* his real family. They were able to successfully answer questions that only Saad and members of his genuine family could know. The reunion with his half-brother, Rodney, was particularly poignant, for it was he who had abandoned Maxie on that summer afternoon. It was Rodney who filled in most of the wretched

THE RING RATINGS, *July 1981*



Jim Watt

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Larry Holmes, Easton, PA**
1. **Mike Weaver***, Los Angeles, CA
2. **Gerry Cooney**, Huntington, NY
3. **Leon Spinks**, St. Louis, MO
4. **Michael Dokes**, Akron, OH
5. **Greg Page**, Louisville, KY
6. **Gerrie Coetzee**, South Africa
7. **Trevor Berbick**, Halifax, Nova Scotia
8. **Marty Monroe**, Los Angeles, CA
9. **James (Quick) Tillis**, Chicago, IL
10. **John Tate**, Knoxville, TN

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Matthew Saad Muhammad, Philadelphia, PA**
1. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad**, Brooklyn, NY
2. **Michael Spinks**, St. Louis, MO
3. **Jerry Martin**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **James Scott**, Rahway, NJ
5. **Carlos DeLeon**, Puerto Rico
6. **Marvin Johnson**, Indianapolis, IN
7. **Yaqui Lopez**, Stockton, CA
8. **Lotte Mwale**, Zambia
9. **Marvin Camel**, Missoula, MT
10. **Mustapha Wasajja**, Denmark

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **Alan Minter**, England
2. **Vito Antuofermo**, Brooklyn, NY
3. **Mustafa Hamsho**, Syria
4. **Wilford Scypion**, New York, NY
5. **Fulgencio Obelmejias**, Venezuela
6. **Dwight Davison**, Detroit, MI
7. **Frank Fletcher**, Philadelphia, PA
8. **Curtis Parker**, Philadelphia, PA
9. **Robbie Epps**, Clovis, NM
10. **Tony Sibson**, England

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ayub Kalule*, Denmark
1. **Maurice Hope****, England
2. **Ray Leonard**, Palmer Park, MD
3. **Wilfred Benitez**, Puerto Rico
4. **Rocky Mattioli**, Australia
5. **Carlos Herrera**, Argentina
6. **Kenny Bristol**, Guyana
7. **Tony Ayala Jr.**, San Antonio, TX
8. **Walter Gomez**, Argentina
9. **Charlie Weir**, South Africa
10. **Nino Gonzalez**, Bayonne, NJ

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ray Leonard, Palmer Park, MD**
1. **Thomas Hearns***, Detroit, MI
2. **Wilfred Benitez**, Puerto Rico
3. **Pipino Cuevas**, Mexico
4. **Roberto Duran**, Panama
5. **Randy Shields**, N. Hollywood, CA
6. **Pete Ranzany**, Sacramento, CA
7. **Adolfo Viruet**, Hoboken, NJ
8. **Jorgen Hansen**, Denmark
9. **Luis Primera**, Venezuela
10. **Bruce Finch**, Milwaukee, WI

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
World Champ: Aaron Pryor*, Cincinnati, OH
1. **Saoul Mamby****, New York, NY
2. **Jo Kimpuani**, France
3. **Dujuan Johnson**, Detroit, MI
4. **Lennox Blackmoore**, Guyana

details.

The story is not a pleasant one. Maxwell's mother had already left her sons with relatives when the burden of too many children, too soon, became unbearable. They, in turn, also decided to dump him. The vile chore was given to Rodney, then only a child himself. He was told to take his younger brother out and not come back with him or he would be the next to go. When an attempt to unload Maxie with another relative failed, Rodney was afraid to return home with his problem still in tow. He told Maxie, "Let's have a race," then took off as fast as he could, not looking back for another 20 years.

"It's deep, man," whispered Saad. "The story made me cry. It shocked me. I'm still stunned."

The hurt of such a terrifying ordeal, the years of wondering why he had been so callously rejected, still pain him. But they seem to have left no scars, and perhaps most remarkably, no bitterness. Maybe fate had stepped in and taken this child by the hand and molded him into a man capable of winning a world championship, capable of rallying back from dreadful ring beating after ring beating to emerge victorious. Saad seems to think so.

"If what happened to me didn't happen, I don't know where I'd be today," he said. "But I know one thing: I came from a pretty bad family. I'd probably be in my brother's shoes. He's got a little piece of a job and is not doing too good."

***

As workout time approaches, members of Muhammad's burgeoning entourage filter into—and out of—the room, a constant reminder of his newly found lifestyle. Always present is Mustafa Ameen, his personal secretary and buffer. A slender, bearded man with thick glasses, he would look somewhat studious if it weren't for the toothpick stuck incongruously in the corner of his mouth. Also on hand is Lana Shabazz, formerly cook for Muhammad Ali. Lana isn't permitted to use the kitchen at Resorts, so she contents herself with selecting the champ's meals from the room service menu. Later that day, she hovers like a mother hen, sampling each dish before allowing Matt to eat. Discovering that the carrots were overcooked seems to be her major contribution. Then there is Yusef Shah, a large, shaven-skulled man whose task is to push a cart loaded with boxing equipment to the gym and back once a day. The rest of his time is spent watching television.

Saad's manager, Bilal Muhammad, was away on business, but most of the happy cast of characters was already aboard the good ship Saad. There were sparring partners Tony Green and Kenny Ringo, trainer Sam Solomon and his assistants, Milt Bailey and Saleem El-Amin, Matt's girlfriend, and his personal photographer,

*WBA Champion
**WBC Champion

5. **Miguel Montilla,** Dominican Republic
6. **Domingo Ayala,** Puerto Rico
7. **Sang Hyun Kim,** South Korea
8. **Bruce Curry,** Ft. Worth, TX
9. **Monroe Brooks,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Leroy Haley,** Las Vegas, NV

LIGHTWEIGHTS

World Champ: Jim Watt, Scotland**

1. **Sean O'Grady*,** Oklahoma City, OK
2. **Hilmer Kenty,** Detroit, MI
3. **Alexis Arguello,** Coral Gables, FL
4. **Aaron Pryor,** Cincinnati, OH
5. **Rodolfo Gonzalez,** Mexico
6. **Howard Davis Jr.,** Glen Cove, NY
7. **Claude Noel,** Trinidad
8. **Edwin Viruet,** Puerto Rico
9. **Ernesto Espana,** Venezuela
10. **Gonzallo Montellano,** Los Angeles, CA

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

World Champ: Samuel Serrano*, Puerto Rico

1. **Cornelius Boza-Edwards**,** England
2. **Rafael (Bazooka) Limon,** Mexico
3. **Bobby Chacon,** Pacoima, CA
4. **Roberto Elizondo,** Corpus Christi, TX
5. **Yasutsune Uehara,** Japan
6. **Ildelfonso Bethelmy,** Venezuela
7. **Johnny Sato,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Victor Echegary,** Argentina
9. **Frankie Baltazar,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Leonel Hernandez,** Venezuela

FEATHERWEIGHTS

World Champ: Salvador Sanchez, Mexico**

1. **Eusebio Pedroza*,** Panama
2. **Wilfredo Gomez,** Puerto Rico
3. **Rocky Lockridge,** Paterson, NJ
4. **Ruben Castillo,** Bakersfield, CA
5. **Roberto Castanon,** Spain
6. **Patrick Ford,** Guyana
7. **Juan LaPorte,** New York, NY
8. **Gustavo Salgado,** Mexico
9. **Francisco Manzo,** Mexico
10. **Paul Ferrari,** Australia

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

World Champ: Wilfredo Gomez, Puerto Rico**

1. **Sergio Palma*,** Argentina
2. **Ricardo Cardona,** Colombia
3. **Leo Cruz,** Dominican Republic
4. **Mike Ayala,** New York, NY
5. **Nicky Perez,** Tucson, AZ
6. **Carmelo Negron,** New York, NY
7. **Edwin Rosario,** Puerto Rico
8. **Juan (Kid) Meza,** Los Angeles, CA
9. **Jose Caba,** Dominican Republic
10. **Jaime Garza,** Los Angeles, CA

BANTAMWEIGHTS

World Champ: Jeff Chandler*, Philadelphia, PA

1. **Lupe Pintor**, Mexico**
2. **Julian Solis, Puerto Rico**
3. **Albert Davila, Los Angeles, CA**
4. **Jorge Lujan,** Panama
5. **Eijiro Murata,** Japan
6. **Roberto Rubaldino,** Mexico
7. **Oscar Muniz,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Jose R. Narvaez,** Argentina
9. **Norberto Cabrera,** Mexico
10. **Chul Ho Kim,** South Korea

FLYWEIGHTS

World Champ: Shoji Oguma, Japan**

1. **Hilario Zapata,** Panama
2. **Pedro Flores,** Mexico
3. **Yoko Gushiken,** Japan
4. **Santos Laciar*,** Argentina
5. **Betulio Gonzalez,** Venezuela
6. **Willie Jensen,** Las Vegas, NV
7. **Peter Mathebula,** South Africa
8. **Luis Ibarra,** Panama
9. **Charlie Magri,** England
10. **Antonio Avelar,** Mexico

Paul Trace, who is documenting Saad's life. ("I photograph everything he does, except when he goes to the bathroom," grins Trace.)

The cost of maintaining such an entourage is draining, and when a series of pesky phone calls stirs Matt from his nap, the subject was broached.

"I am just enjoying the comforts a champion is supposed to have, that's all!" he says with a giggle. "I had to sacrifice a lot of things to get where I am, and now I'm not going to let myself go." He sure isn't.

The champion's sparring sessions are much like his fights. He permits gross indignities for most of the round, and then lest anyone forget who's boss, opens up with a flurry of bombs in the last 30 seconds. Hardly the stuff lengthy careers are made of.

Solomon, that grandfatherly conditioner who always seems to be around the big money (he trained Ernie Terrell, Eugene "Cyclone" Hart, and Leon Spinks, among many others), yells for Saad to watch out for punches up the middle. His instructions go, for the most part, unheeded. Needless to say, it will be an uppercut by Sutherland, up the middle, that splits Matt's lip open the following Saturday.

In order to understand Muhammad's ring style, one has to look back to his 18th professional bout, in March of 1977. At the time, Don Elbaum was running a television tournament along the lines of the ill-fated Don King-ABC United States championship series. Elbaum's bankroll was smaller than King's, but his matchmaking skills were far superior. One classic bill, at the ancient Philly Arena, presented a doubleheader featuring three boxers who would later go on to win world titles. Vito Antuofermo outpunched Cyclone Hart in one match, and in the other, Matthew Franklin—as he was then known—squared off against none other than Eddie Gregory, soon to become Mustafa Muhammad.

Up until that point, Matt had been basically a careful counterpuncher. Wins over Mate Parlov and Marvin Camel had earned him respect. However, the fans were not exactly breaking down doors to give him respect. He surprised Gregory, and himself, by dropping Eddie in the opening round with a sneak right. Franklin seemed shocked at what he had done and went into a defensive shell for most of the remaining rounds. Gregory, often criticized for being overly nonchalant, uncharacteristically hustled his way to a controversial split decision. This upset Matthew so much that he completely changed his ring philosophy. He vowed never to

Saad Muhammad celebrates his title-winning kayo of Marvin Johnson. The bout, held in April 1979 in Indianapolis, was typical Saad: He absorbed tons of punishment before emerging victorious with an eighth-round knockout.

be shortchanged again. From then on, it would be kill or be killed; take no survivors. In 17 bouts since then—all wins—only two opponents have gone the distance.

The come-from-behind legend began with the first Marvin Johnson fight at the Spectrum in July 1977. It was a brutal give-and-take war in the finest Philly tradition. And when Matthew shrugged off alarming punishment to kayo Johnson in the 12th and final round, suddenly a star was born.

On his way to the title, our protagonist's fights took on the appearance of an instant replay. He was forced to scrape himself off the canvas before disposing of both Bill Douglas and Richie Kates. Yaqui Lopez also provided a few anxious moments before succumbing. These last-ditch heroics had become a habit.

Finally matched in a return go with Johnson—Marvin had by then recovered well enough to thrash Parlov for the WBC belt—Matthew was given his first dose of exposure on national TV. He gave America a vintage performance. Following his usual shoddy start, he suffered an ugly gash and was in danger of bleeding to death when the cavalry, in the form of a prodigious right hand, came charging to the rescue in the eighth round. A round, not incidentally, that was named THE RING'S 1978 Round of the Year.

Saad has managed to retain the title seven times, staging supernatural comebacks in his first encounter with John Conteh, and then again against old nemesis Lopez in 1980's Fight of the Year. His two most recent defenses, against Vonzell Johnson and Sutherland, called for miracles of a minor nature after—you guessed it—he squandered the early rounds to clearly inferior opponents. How much longer these spectacular resurrections can continue is anybody's guess. Certainly not indefinitely; just ask Danny "Little Red" Lopez.

***

Like so many of his generation, Matthew was enamored of Ali. He patterned much of his career and life after his hero. There was, most notably, the same embracing of Islam, and a similar change of names. Saad also publicly announced his conversion, like Ali, on the occasion of his winning the world title. He is surrounded by people who got their start at the fringe of Ali's robe. It would be easy to assume he's just a naive clod caught up in idolatry. This, however, is *not* the case. Some of America's black youth may have become Muslim because it was the "in" thing to do. Others, Saad among them, turned to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed as a safe harbor in their sea of confusion. When the teenage Franklin found himself in the slammer because of his gang war activities, he needed more than his fists to see him through. And Allah was there.

Frank Gelb, currently the director of sports at Resorts, at one time managed Saad and has crossed law suits with him on several occasions when money and contracts became a bone of contention. If anybody had a bad rap to lay on the Muslim influence in the champ's life, it should be Gelb. Not so.

"I've noticed a tremendous change in Matthew since he became a Muslim," says Gelb. "He's much more serious, more dedicated, and is better versed ... has more worldly knowledge. It's worked out well for everybody. I've seen him grow from a kid to a man."

If anyone deserves credit for Matt's personal metamorphosis, it would be Bilal Muhammad. Bilal has that proverbial cat-that-swallowed-the-canary look about him, his smile one of almost smug contentment. When his presence was first made known to the press—around the time of the second fight with Marvin Johnson—he introduced himself as Matt's "religious adviser." After some preliminary wrangling, he emerged as the manager of record. He was a salesman before becoming a management consultant, and still knows how to peddle his wares. Saad's purses have surpassed anything in the history of the light heavyweight division, and Bilal has helped make them—the man as well as the purses—rich.

Concerned over Saad's relative lack of exposure outside the sporting pages, and consid-

ering the short lifespan of a boxer, Bilal hired the New York public relations firm of Rogers & Cowan to package the champ. They hope to make inroads into the lucrative area of commercial endorsements—and what jock doesn't? Unfortunately, being the light heavyweight champion of the world is viewed by those on Madison Avenue somewhat akin to being the second man to fly the Atlantic.

Still, Muhammad has a working agreement with two advertisers, Sasson and Pony. He wears their gear in the ring for a small renumeration. The big bucks, however, might be right around the corner. Several production companies have expressed an interest in making a movie about Saad's life. He was offered a part in *Rocky III*, but when he learned that he would become a Sylvester Stallone knockout victim, his ego flared and he turned it down.

"I've got my pride, man," he explained. "I don't get beat in the ring, and I'm not about to get beat on the screen. And besides, they weren't going to use my real name."

***

The house sits on the crest on an affluent suburban street just outside of Philadelphia. It is a sprawling split-level with manicured grounds and a swimming pool in the back. Music blares from inside, but no one is home. I know I'm at the right place because a small sign on the front lawn reads "Muhammad's Summit." Before long, a silver Mercedes roars up the road and slams to a halt at the curb. Out pops Saad and his beautiful lady, all smiles.

"I know, I know, I'm late," he laughs. "How long you been waiting?"

We go inside and take the grand tour.

We settle into the combination library-trophy room, a videotape of the Sutherland knockout flickering violently on the screen. Saad's mounting battle wounds are plainly evident in the close proximity of the couch. When looked squarely in the face, he gingerly fingers his battered eyebrows.

"When I get cut, I don't want to see anybody ... I don't want to talk to anybody," he says. "I'm very self-conscious. I would like to stay looking good, but hey, if you're a fighter, that's what comes with the winnings."

It is this, as well as the wish to get out of the racket with all his faculties intact, that has Saad talking retirement. His major remaining goal is to unify the title. The dream match with Eddie Mustafa died along with MAPS, and now he's talking about moving up to the heavys. If Mustafa stays with the big boys, the WBA brass, in their infinite nonwisdom, almost certainly will not recognize Saad. There is no money in that! It could, then, be some time before unification is possible, let alone financially feasible. What's left?

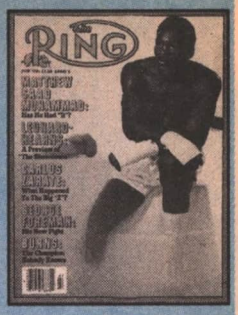
***

Outside of Mustafa, the biggest money match is Michael Spinks. Also the most dangerous. One body of thought says that Saad better get Spinks soon, if he's going to get him at all. Michael is improving with each fight.

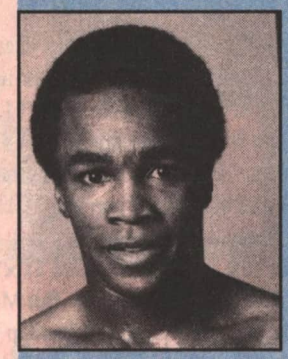
"My doctor says I need three months off," says Saad. "My body—after two title defenses in a span of 56 days—is crying out for a rest. My lip will take that long to heal anyway. Then, if I can't unify the title, I'll probably take on Stinks ... er, Spinks."

There is also talk of breaking Bob Foster's record of 11 defenses. That would surely stretch destiny, and Saad's physiognomy, to the limit. Can he do it? Maybe so ... for Saad Muhammad has already come a long way from the Franklin Parkway lo those 20 years ago. ■

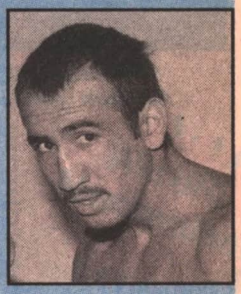
THE RING, July 1981



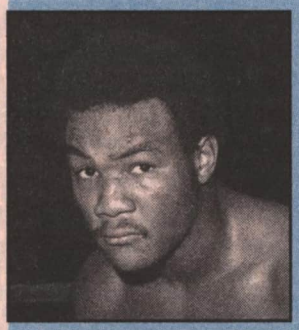
The Cover: Photographer Paul Trace's portrait of Matthew Saad Muhammad makes for a stunning cover. This issue features a pair of stories on the light heavyweight champion, a profile by Nigel Collins and an analysis by Lew Freedman ("Has Saad Had It?").



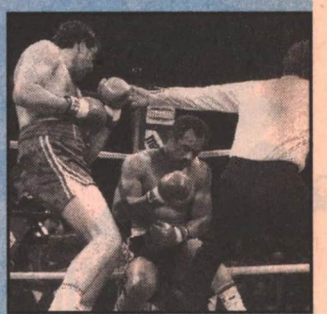
Leonard-Hearns: Welterweight champions Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns, headed for a superfight showdown, make their cases. Says Leonard (pictured), "Thomas Hearns is a human being, not some immortal superpower." Says Hearns, "[Leonard] has never fought a man who was as fast as he is, taller than him, has a longer reach, and much greater punching power."



Zarate Update: Two years after his controversial loss to Lupe Pintor and subsequent retirement, former bantamweight champion Carlos Zarate is profiled by Christopher Coats. "Boxing is for other men now," says the legendary Mexican. Zarate would eventually return to the ring, launching a comeback in 1986.



Foreman's Calling: It has been four years since George Foreman has climbed through the ropes. The former heavyweight king, 32, is a preacher now, and his life as a professional boxer seems as if it belonged to someone else. Steve Marantz takes an up-close-and-personal look at the new George Foreman.



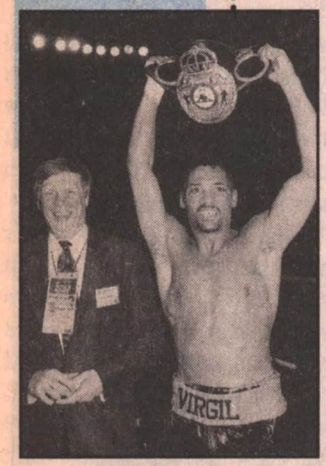
Fighter Of The Month: Heavyweight contender Gerry Cooney is chosen for his stunning 54-second blitz of Ken Norton at Madison Square Garden. Cooney, a crushing puncher, is destined to challenge WBC champion Larry Holmes in what figures to be the biggest fight in boxing history.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Steve Farhood

TOUGH FOR HILL TO CLIMB

Bill Sorensen, who manages WBA light heavyweight champion Virgil Hill, also happens to be the mayor of Bismarck, North Dakota. But when asked why Hill was traveling to Munich, Germany, to face undefeated homebody Henry Maske in a unification bout on October 12, Sorensen didn't bother giving a politically correct answer.



Sorensen and Hill: Cautiously optimistic

"To us," he said, "it's a money deal."

Sorensen told THE RING that for agreeing to duke it out in Maske's backyard, Hill will make "at least $1.8-million." Maske is guaranteed $1.4-million, and will likely pocket more.

As one who is quite familiar with the value of hometown advantage, Hill realizes the difficulty of his assignment. Not only is he fighting on the road, but he's facing a tall, awkward southpaw whose style has frustrated all of Maske's previous 10 challengers.

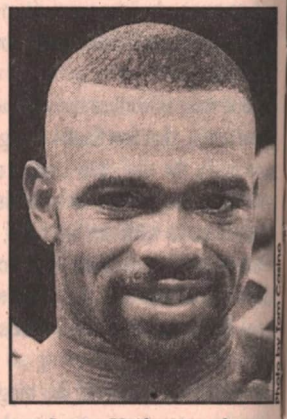
Incredibly, it wasn't until his most recent effort, an off-the-floor decision over Louis Del Valle, that Hill faced his first left-hander. "That experience will help, of course," Hill said. "I don't think there's anyone more awkward than Del Valle. But Maske doesn't fight anything like him. He's not gonna do any of those cutesy moves. He's more of a standup European fighter."

Both manager and fighter acknowledge that in order to win a bout that is likely to last the distance, Hill will have to capture most of the rounds convincingly. Given Maske's recent dominance, that would seem a longshot. Why, then, should Hill's supporters believe he'll leave for Europe with one belt and return with two?

"Maske is definitely a proven fighter," said Hill, "but he hasn't fought that many tough guys. Then again, someone might say that about me."

LISTEN UP

The feature bout on HBO's *Boxing After Dark* in October: Featherweight **Kevin Kelley** vs. undefeated New Englander **Edwin Santana** ... After IBF super middleweight champion **Roy Jones** makes his mandatory defense against **Bryant Brannon**, look for him to partially unify the title by taking on WBC champion **Vincenzo Nardiello**. A Jones-**Steve Collins** bout will also be part of the package. Speaking of Jones, preliminary negotiations have taken place for a duel with WBC super welterweight champion **Terry Norris**. Should the fight materialize, the pound-for-pound entrants would clash at 162 pounds ... As we went to press, HBO was about to sign boxing's best-kept secret, WBA welterweight champion **Ike "Bazooka" Quartey** ... There's still talk that a comebacking **Sugar Ray Leonard** will clash with **Hector Camacho** this fall. Sugar Ray wants the fight in Las Vegas, while "The Macho Man" would prefer New York. Should it come off, the fight will be worth about $5-million to Leonard. Good work if you can get it.



Jones: Unification plans

FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
Mike Tyson	Evander Holyfield	10-1	Holyfield can't fight at this level anymore
Henry Akinwande	Alexandr Zolkin	7-5	Winner becomes legitimate contender
Andrew Golota	Tim Witherspoon	9-5	Very good fight; I'd like to see this one
Roy Jones	Steve Collins	15-1	Collins not bad, but in way over his head

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#DEB-2 (6").....$
#DEB-3 (5").....$

★★★★★★★★★★

T-SHIRTS

#QTS (each).....$1

★★★★★★★★★★

DOUBLE-DOUB END BAGS

#DDEB (Mexican style)
.....$3

★★★★★★★★★★

SUPER GAUZ

#CG-1 (Box of 90 rolls)
.....$4
#CG-1 (per roll) .....

★★★★★★★★★★

CANVAS HEAVYBAGS

#CHB (65-70 lbs.)
(filled) $7
(plus additional $15 ship
#CHB-1 (unfilled)....$4

★★★★★★★★★★

RINGSIDE NYL BOXING SHOE

#LBS (sizes 6-13 -- wh black, red or blue).....$4

★★★★★★★★★★

ULTIMATE BAG GLOVES

#UBG-M.....$4
#UBG-L.....$4
#UBG-XL.....$4

★★★★★★★★★★

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